THE SELLING OF KIMBERLY BERGALIS

OCTOBER 21, 1991 · $2.95

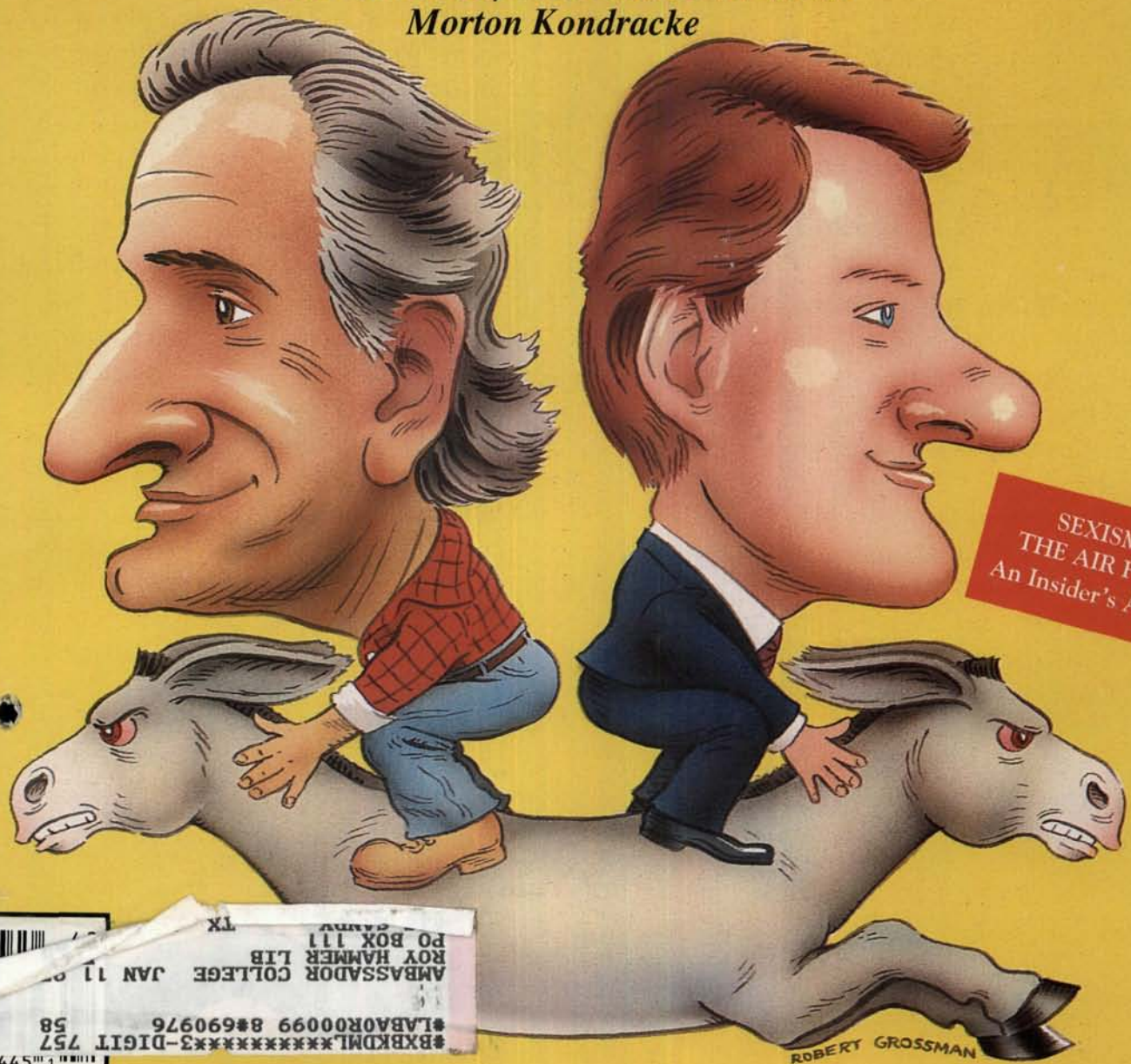
THE NEW REPUBLIC

Touch-tone democracy · Are the settlements illegal? · Clifford Geertz on Indonesia

THEY'RE OFF!

Tom William Jennings Harkin
Sidney Blumenthal

Bill Clinton, Postliberal Man
Morton Kondracke



SEXISM IN THE AIR FORCE
An Insider's Account

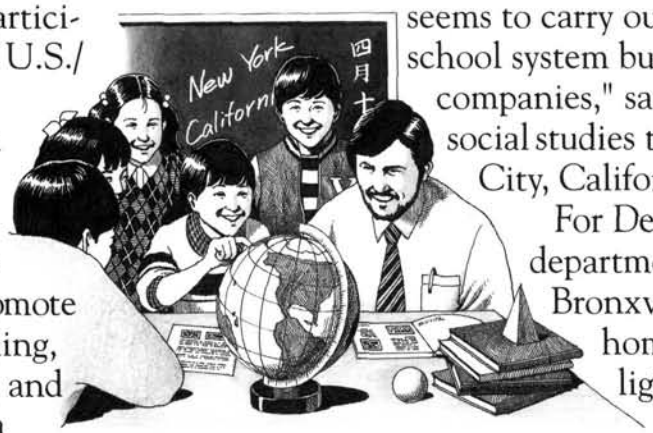
AMBASSADOR COLLEGE JAN 11
ROY HAMMER LIB
PO BOX 111
TX
*BXBKDML**********3-DIGIT 757
*LABAOR00099 8*609976 58
787445

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Japan and America: Where the Twain Meet

"Oh, East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet," Kipling wrote long ago, and even today that saying sums up the feelings of many Americans and Japanese toward each other. But William Brinker, a high school social studies teacher from Farmington Hills, Michigan, disagrees. "The gulf between our cultures exists, but it can be bridged. We just have to work harder at understanding one another."

Brinker was a participant in the annual U.S./Japan Teachers Exchange Program sponsored by Hitachi. Now in its fourth year, this exchange helps promote mutual understanding, cultural awareness, and friendship between our societies on a personal level.



Since 1987, the program has sponsored the visits of 16 American teachers to Japan and five Japanese to the United States. Last year saw the largest exchange so far: four American and three Japanese teachers. For three weeks, they toured the sites, taught children, and lived in the homes of their hosts. For most, it was their first direct exposure to the culture they had so often taught about. Even for Brinker, who had spent time in Japan 36 years ago as a serviceman, the experience was eye-opening. "I came away with a much better understanding of the Japanese people," he says.

As teachers, the American visitors were struck by the way Japanese parents support the school system and the respect students show in the classroom. "The support and love of the family seems to carry out not only in the school system but also into their companies," says Greg Alvarado, a social studies teacher from Daly City, California.

For Delia Grogan-Selby, a department chairperson from Bronxville, New York, the home stay was a highlight of her visit. "I felt like I had parachuted into my own family, but it was Japan," she says.

Hitachi is proud to sponsor the U.S./Japan Teachers Exchange Program. We believe its positive impact will multiply as returning teachers share their personal experiences with students, colleagues, and friends at home.

For more information, write: Hitachi, P.O. Box 7515, Grand Central Station, New York, NY, 10163.

HITACHI®

© 1991 HITACHI

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NEW REPUBLIC

A Weekly Journal of Opinion

OCTOBER 21, 1991

FOUNDED 1914
WASHINGTON, D.C.
ISSUE 4,005

Editor-in-Chief and Chairman
MARTIN PERETZ

Editor
ANDREW SULLIVAN

Literary Editor
LEON WIESELTIER

Managing Editor
DOROTHY WICKENDEN

Senior Editors
FRED BARNES, SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL, HENDRIK HERTZBERG, ANN HULBERT, MICKEY KAUS, MICHAEL KINSLEY, MORTON KONDRACKE, JACOB WEISBERG, ROBERT WRIGHT

Editor, New Republic Books (Basic Books)
PETER EDIDIN

Economics
ROBERT KUTTNER

Films
STANLEY KAUFFMANN

Theater
ROBERT BRUSTEIN

Poetry
RICHARD HOWARD

Art
MARK STEVENS

Architecture
HERBERT MUSCHAMP

Contributing Editors
ELIOT A. COHEN, ROBERT COLES, STANLEY CROUCH, JAMES K. GLASSMAN, JOHN B. JUDIS, CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER, VINT LAWRENCE, LOUIS MENAND, ADAM MICHNIK, ROBERT B. REICH, JONATHAN RIEDER, MAGGIE SCARF, RONALD STEEL, E.V. THAW, ANNE TYLER, NICHOLAS VON HOFFMAN, MICHAEL WALZER, C. VANN WOODWARD

Editorial-Corporate Coordinator
LAURA E. OBOLENSKY

Assistant to the Editors
JUNE HALEY

Assistant Editors
KAREN LEHRMAN, LEONA HIRAOKA ROTH

Assistant Literary Editor
ALEXANDER STAR

Production Manager
BRUCE STEINKE

Assistant Production Manager
ANGELINA HAN

Production Assistant
AMY E. KNOX

Reporter-Researchers
ANDREW BATES, JONATHAN BINES, MATTHEW LEVIE, MATTHEW REES

President
JEFFREY L. DEARTH

Publisher
JOAN M. STAPLETON

Associate Publisher-Marketing
PAUL J. VIZZA

Associate Publisher-Circulation
H. EDWARD YOUNG, JR.

Controller
JEAN GANDY

Advertising Director
JENNIFER BARRETT

Accounting Manager
CHRISTINA R. OVERHOLSER

Circulation Manager
PATTI NAJDA

Advertising Assistant
CECELIA M. STEPHENS

Accounting Assistant
CHRISTINE SCHAUT

Back Issues and Reception
CAROLYN PARHAM

Director of Joint Advertising Sales
The New Republic/National Review
JAMES J. McCABE

Cover by Robert Grossman for THE NEW REPUBLIC. Articles on pages 18 and 22.

4 **MICHAEL KINSLEY** TRB: LIAR OR BOOB? The choice Clarence Thomas leaves the Senate.

6 **CORRESPONDENCE** The Nixons in China, &c.

7 **THE EDITORS** GUNS 'N' POSES The worrying logic behind George Bush's disarmament gesture. NOTEBOOK Abolishing the First Lady, &c.

10 **JON BOWERMASTER** NAIROBI POSTCARD: C'EST MOI Kenya's phony democracy.

11 **JONATHAN BINES** YOU HAVE REACHED... Tried calling the government lately?

12 **JACOB WEISBERG** THE ACCUSER The marketing of Kimberly Bergalis, AIDS martyr.

14 **EUGENE V. ROSTOW** RESOLVED Has the U.N. said the West Bank settlements are legal?

16 **CYNTHIA WRIGHT** G.I. JILL Why the Joes are a little hard to take.

18 **MORTON KONDRACKE** SLICK WILLY Bill Clinton's ideas are a challenge to liberal traditionalists. But does he have the guts to take them on?

22 **SIDNEY BLUMENTHAL** THE PRIMAL SCREAM Tom Harkin's superheated populist rhetoric arouses the faithful, but can it carry him to the nomination?

24 **NEAL POLLACK** THEY'RE OFF! 112 points of presidential light.

26 **STANLEY KAUFFMANN** ON FILMS: DIFFERENT PLACES, DIFFERENT TROUBLES *The Indian Runner* is stark and convincing, *The Fisher King* farfetched and phony.

28 **ROBERT BRUSTEIN** ON THEATER: YUPPIE REALISM, CONTINUED *Lips Together, Teeth Apart* survives its marriage of romantic comedy and liberal guilt.

30 **CLIFFORD GEERTZ** THE YEAR OF LIVING CULTURALLY What is the Festival of Indonesia? And what is Indonesia? A critical look at cultural diplomacy.

36 **LUC SANTE** MEAN STREETS *Damon Runyon* by Jimmy Breslin

37 **TERENCE WINCH** POEM *Cathedral*

39 **JONATHAN RIEDER** TAWANA AND THE PROFESSOR *The Alchemy of Race and Rights* by Patricia Williams

43 **FRED BARNES** WASHINGTON DIARIST: UP AGAINST THE MALL

THE NEW REPUBLIC, Vol. 205, Number 17, Issue 4,005, October 21, 1991. (Printed in the U.S. on October 2, 1991.) Published weekly (except for combined issues dated Jan. 7 & 14, July 15 & 22, Aug. 19 & 26, and Sept. 16 & 23, 1991) at 1220 19th Street, NW, Washington, DC 20036. Telephone (202) 331-7494. The New Republic/National Review joint advertising (212) 679-7330. Yearly subscriptions, $69.97; foreign, $99.97; Canada, $84.97. Back issues, $3.50 (includes postage & handling). © 1991 by The New Republic, Inc. (ISSN 0028-6583). Second-class postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide, Media Review Digest. Microform, CD-ROM, issue and article copies are available through University Microfilms Intnl., 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. Telephone 1-800-521-0600. Member, Audit Bureau of Circulations. Unsolicited manuscripts can be returned only if accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Subscribers: Please send all remittances, changes of address, and subscription inquiries to Subscription Service Dept., The New Republic, P.O. Box 56515, Boulder, CO 80322. For subscription problems call 800-274-6686.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

TRB®

FROM WASHINGTON

Liar or boob?

For senators wondering whether to confirm Clarence Thomas for the Supreme Court, the issues may seem dismayingly broad and muddy: advice and consent, natural law, privacy, race, and so on. But one issue is narrow and clear.

In his confirmation hearing, Thomas testified under oath that he had never discussed *Roe* v. *Wade* and had no opinion about it. This was not an offhand comment. Everyone knew in advance that *Roe* was the issue most on senators' minds. Thomas made the remark with malice aforethought (in the legal sense of premeditated design, not evil intent). There are only two possibilities. Either he was lying or he was telling the truth. Which was it? The answer seems obvious, but let us consider each possibility impartially.

Suppose he was lying—under oath, at his own Supreme Court confirmation hearing. Perhaps he shouldn't go to jail for perjury, but surely he should be disqualified from a lifetime appointment as an unappealable arbiter of justice and the Constitution. That is true whatever you think about *Roe* itself (I think it's a bad decision). It is true whatever you think about the propriety of asking Supreme Court nominees their views on leading constitutional precedents (I think it's absurd not to ask). Advice and consent is a complete joke if outright liars get confirmed.

So let us suppose Thomas was telling the truth. He has never thought seriously about the most controversial constitutional ruling of our day, even though it came down while he was in law school. In an especially mawkish exercise of "outhousery," Thomas insisted that, with a wife and a job, he lacked the luxury other law students enjoyed of discussing constitutional issues. Fine. But what about the next eighteen years? Is someone so heroically unreflective about the Constitution qualified to sit on the Supreme Court? At the hearings, Thomas and his supporters offered the usual guff about the need for justices to be "impartial." But Supreme Court justices are not like jurors in a criminal trial, chosen as blank slates. Justices are supposed to be chosen for their wisdom and knowledge.

If Clarence Thomas has no opinion about *Roe* v. *Wade*, he is just about alone in the world. Among others with opinions about *Roe* are several sitting members of the Court, who have expressed those opinions in past rulings and dissents. Of course a good justice should always be open to reconsideration and rethinking. But the idea that any Supreme Court justice with an opinion about an important constitutional matter has illegitimately "prejudged" it is ridiculous. To the contrary, anyone with no opinion on a matter as important as *Roe* is intellectually unfit for the job.

So, take your pick: liar or unqualified. Either way, the correct vote on the nominee seems clear.

Nevertheless, the hesitance of senators to vote no is understandable. The rejection of Clarence Thomas would leave a sour taste in everyone's mouth. Even liberals would not rejoice as they did in the defeat of Robert Bork—even though, measured in human terms, the defeat of Bork (a late-middle-aged legal scholar whose whole life had been pointed toward this one goal) was more poignant than the defeat of Thomas (an ambitious young official left to languish on the second-most prestigious court in the country) would be. The difference, of course, is the way the campaign for Thomas has been conducted.

President Bush chose Thomas largely because he is black. Now Thomas's supporters are compounding the cynicism of that initial exercise in reverse discrimination by mau-mauing anyone who dares to oppose him with the threat of being tarred as racist. *The Wall Street Journal* upbraids the Judiciary Committee for endorsing "two white men," Anthony Kennedy and David Souter, while splitting 7-7 "on the black judge from Pin Point, Georgia." At the hearings, Senator Orrin Hatch even implied there was some kind of racist double standard involved in asking Thomas about abortion seventy times whereas Souter had been asked only thirty-six times.

It's true that Kennedy and Souter were confirmed without having to answer the abortion question. But neither of them claimed to have given it no thought. And I don't recall any of Thomas's current defenders complaining about lax standards for white men at the time. Is it their position that the rules for confirming Supreme Court nominees can never change, or that they can only get easier (as they did between Bork and Kennedy),

continued on page 42

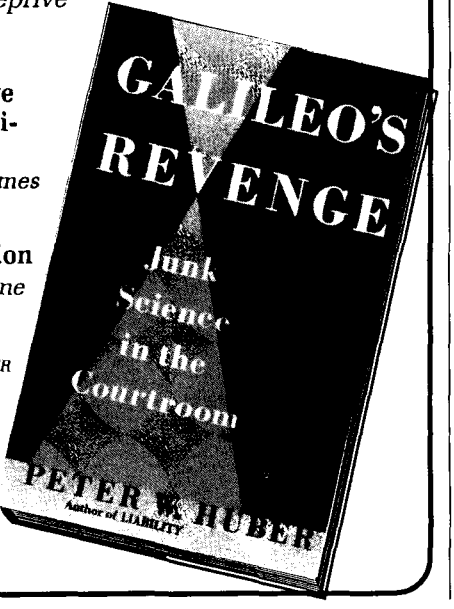
CAN A FALL CAUSE CANCER?

In the let-it-all-in atmosphere of today's courtrooms, lawyers have set off in pursuit of scientific speculators, cranks, and iconoclasts. Peter Huber uses examples ranging from the Audi to the Dalkon Shield to a morning sickness drug called Benedictin to show how taking the bizarre seriously in court has resulted in astronomical judgments that not only bankrupt companies but deprive all of us of life-saving therapies.

"A lively history of how courts have tried to come to grips with sophisticated medicine and technology." *BETTY ANN KEVLES, Los Angeles Times*

"A valuable and timely look at a crucial aspect of America's litigation explosion." *DOUG BANDOW, Fortune*

"Witty, informed, hard-hitting... Read it and weep." *MARTIN GARDNER*



$23.00 at bookstores
or call toll-free 800-331-3761.

BasicBooks

A Division of HarperCollins *Publishers*
Also available from HarperCollins*Canada Ltd*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Robert Bellah on Market Totalitarianism

According to the Chicago school of economics, human beings are exclusively self-interest maximizers and the primary measure of self-interest is money. This school's bizarre ideas have a powerful sway over government. Ann Swidler, when doing interviews for our new book, *The Good Society* (Knopf), talked to an expert at the Environmental Protection Agency about how it figures trade-offs in human lives saved versus the costs of safety devices that would save them. Ann suggested, "Some people believe human life is priceless." The government expert replied, "We have no data on that."

A recent poll showed that the thing affluent Americans can least do without is their microwave oven. An increasing number of American families never has a meal together. One by one, family members drift into the kitchen and stick something in the microwave (this is grazing rather than having a meal). Then it's, "So long, I gotta go." What happens to the family when its colonization by the economy reaches this extent?

According to the market model, higher education is just a means to success, not a way of challenging students to think more deeply about themselves and the world.

I could go on giving examples, but the great irony is that the economic conception of life turns out to be destructive of our economy! Community is a stronger basis for an effective economy than self-interest — as Japan reveals.

There is a market totalitarianism that parallels state totalitarianism; both eat up the substance of society. We need to limit market forces when they threaten to dominate our lives; we must withstand consumerism and shallow individualism. It is here that all institutions that embody moral standards are important, the church chief among them. The church has a long history of being the rallying ground for moral advances. We need to learn from what our sister churches in eastern Europe have done to provide space to question a given order and imagine new alternatives.

— adapted from the NEW OXFORD REVIEW

These comments from Robert Bellah say much about the purpose of the NEW OXFORD REVIEW. Edited by lay Catholics, the REVIEW is an ecumenical monthly magazine exploring the moral and spiritual bases of a good society, and probing the significant puzzles in life: evil, generosity, suffering, love, death, and the meaning of it all.

We've been characterized by Martin E. Marty as "lively," by *Newsweek* as "thoughtful and often cheeky," and by the *Los Angeles Times* as "influential." We kick around a wide variety of issues and defy easy pigeonholing. Writers who've appeared in our pages include such diversely penetrating intellects as Christopher Lasch, Daniel Bell, Walker Percy, Robert Coles, Norman Lear, John Lukacs, Jean Bethke Elshtain, Irving Howe, and Henri Nouwen. If you refuse to bow down to the idol of The Market, give us a try!

new oxford review

(Please allow 2 to 8 weeks for delivery of first issue)

SPECIAL DISCOUNT RATES FOR FIRST-TIME SUBSCRIBERS

- ☐ One-year subscription. . . . . .$14 (regularly $19)
- ☐ One-year student, unemployed, or retired person's subscription . . . . . .$12 (regularly $16)
- ☐ Two-year subscription . . . . .$23 (regularly $35)
- ☐ One-year Canadian or foreign subscription . . . . US$17 (regularly $22) Payment must be drawn in US Dollars
- ☐ Sample copy. $3.50

NAME (Please print or type)

STREET ADDRESS

CITY STATE ZIP CODE

Send coupon or letter. Make check payable to NEW OXFORD REVIEW. Mail to:

NEW OXFORD REVIEW
Room 485
1069 Kains Ave.
Berkeley, CA 94706

PAYMENT MUST ACCOMPANY ORDER

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

CORRESPONDENCE

Fairy godfather

To the editors:

Perhaps enraged by General Norman Schwarzkopf's unfortunate "military fairies" remark at West Point, Gregg Easterbrook ("Operation Desert Shill," September 30) did not turn his talents for debunking analysis to the military reformers' spurious attempts to take credit for victory in the war. But as a journalist closely associated with the military reform school, Mr. Easterbrook's view of the importance of that movement may be skewed.

The military reform effort deserves high marks for the Goldwater-Nichols Act, the law that unified the command structure at the highest levels of the military. Yet the reform movement failed to understand or anticipate the needs of line soldiers, though it presumed to speak for the average grunt. To be fair, Mr. Easterbrook acknowledges some of the movement's shortcomings, noting how the M-1 Abrams tank and the M-2/3 Bradley fighting vehicle, two weapons reviled by reformers, acquitted themselves well in the Gulf war. But he misses the sense in which the military reform movement was and remains an inside-the-Beltway phenomenon. Until reporters and reformers are willing to do the legwork required to engage soldiers on their home ground, they will have to endure—and may well deserve—the reputation as "military fairies."

THOMAS DONNELLY
Springfield, Virginia

The writer is editor of *Army Times*.

Nixon in heaven

To the editors:

As one who thought Alice Goodman's libretto for *Nixon in China* was fraught with subtle disparagements of President and Mrs. Nixon's humble upbringings, I was delighted to see Leon Wieseltier take on *The Death of Klinghoffer* ("Clagic Trash," September 30) on the grounds of class snobbery. But then again, there's nothing we Nixon people like better than a lusty attack on self-styled American elites. I hope you sent a copy to former Vice President Agnew.

JOHN H. TAYLOR
Yorba Linda, California

The writer is director of the Richard Nixon Library & Birthplace.

Lawyers in arms

To the editors:

TRB's thoughts on Vice President Quayle's speech to the ABA ("Quayle's Case," September 9) touched more than a few raw nerves among lawyers, but made matters little clearer.

First, TRB urges that punitive damages should be denied in the absence of "clear proof of wrongdoing." Yet it is *already* the law—at least in New York—that punitive damages are available only upon proof of intentional unlawful acts or where the defendant acted with malice (or the facts permit an inference of malice). The problem is not the principle, but its application. Both trial and appellate courts have long reduced or eliminated awards found to be excessive or not supported by the evidence.

Second, on the use of "expert" testimony, I am troubled that TRB would bar testimony that did not "reflect a widespread view among similar experts." Thus, TRB would have excluded the testimony of "heretics" such as Copernicus and Galileo. The testimony of a qualified expert must be subject to the same test as that for all other witnesses: credibility. But to bar an expert because his view does not comport with traditionally accepted notions does more than deny the jury the right to accept or reject it; it denies the jury the right even to *consider* it.

ALAN B. KATZ
Farmingdale, New York

Neocons, con.

To the editors:

Jacob Weisberg's comments on conservative wars ("Hunter Gatherers," September 2) are provocative but misleading. Neither Tom Fleming nor I would ever suggest that all recipients of neoconservative-controlled funding are mere minions who mechanically recite neoconservative doctrines. But Mr. Weisberg's singling out of Paul Weyrich, Bill Buckley, and Bill Simon as non-neoconservative allies of the neoconservatives does not provide appropriate illustrations.

It seems all three have become indistinguishable from the neoconservatives in terms of their social circles and in most of their views. Mr. Simon's Olin Foundation is largely staffed by neoconservatives; and as John Judis shows in a well-researched biography, Mr. Buckley moved irreversibly into the social (and eventually political) world of Abe Rosenthal and Irving Kristol in the early '70s. Mr. Weyrich's Committee for a Free Congress, moreover, would have to shut down if neocon philanthropies decided for some reason to leave this client in the lurch.

It is hard for me to recall "backtracking" in my account of Mr. Simon's spat with Ed Crane of CATO. Never did I intimate that it was only the neocons who went after Mr. Crane. I did suggest that neocons, who are essentially Zionist social democrats, don't like libertarians, who are isolationist anti-statists, and therefore do not fund them as generously as some other applicants for neocon money.

PAUL GOTTFRIED
Lancaster, Pennsylvania

Jacob Weisberg replies:

I do not agree that the views and "social circles" of Bill Buckley, Paul Weyrich, and Bill Simon are indistinguishable from those of the neoconservatives, but I think I was fair in reporting Mr. Gottfried's views. On the backtracking, let me refresh his memory. In March Mr. Gottfried wrote that Ed Crane, the president of the CATO Institute, could "no longer be considered an intellectual free agent" because of his reliance on funds from neoconservative foundations, particular Olin and Bradley. Two months later he wrote that he was "impressed by CATO's defiance of neocon blackmailers."

Arnold the Greek

To the editors:

In "The Use and Abuse of Multiculturalism" (September 16 & 23) Robert Brustein advocates cultural diversity in art and mentions as an example the casting of an African-American actor as Laura's Swedish brother in his version of Strindberg's *The Father*. He claims he did so "without disturbing, so far as [he] could tell, the equilibrium of a single observer."

The concept is definitely legitimate. But I'm sure the public was startled when, expecting a blond Caucasian, it saw an Afro-American walk on stage—just as it would be if Arnold Schwarzenegger appeared in the role of Socrates. The play is perhaps enriched, but it should be taken into account, especially if realism is an important goal in the direction, that the observers are not colorblind.

Moreover, I can't help noticing that few directors would now choose a Caucasian to play Othello. Would it be considered offensive or politically incorrect to do so?

DOMINIQUE LANDO
Medford, Massachusetts

continued on page 42

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NEW REPUBLIC

OCTOBER 21, 1991

GUNS 'N' POSES

"For nearly a century the two superpowers have stood chained to each other at a precipice and somehow resisted the temptation to push," *Newsweek*'s Jerry Adler apocalyptically declared last week. "Now, suddenly and decisively, one has taken a step back." "For the first time in his presidency," gushed R.W. Apple, probably not for the first time, in *The New York Times*, "President Bush reached out boldly tonight and put his stamp on the future.... Often derided as a man without vision, able but timid, a reacter who succeeded mainly because fate marched with him, the president this time gave the lie to such portrayals."

For a president who takes a manic interest in how the press treats him, these assessments of his dramatic, unilateral arms-cutting gambit of September 27 must have been a joy to behold. As usual, the announcement seemed designed more for the politics of its presentation than for the substance of its strategic report. Mr. Bush kept his plans secret from all but a handful of advisers, so as to maximize its impact. But the drama and the rhetoric also meant that no one warned the president that the grandiosity of his rhetoric cleared the way for far more extensive cuts in nuclear and domestic arms than he intends or hopes for.

In the details of Mr. Bush's announcement, we find little with which to quibble. Its principal virtue, for the purpose of bilateral arms control, is the renunciation of tactical nuclear weapons. Many of these are rendered virtually obsolete by the development of conventional weapons of equal accuracy. And the possibility that it might create an opening for Messrs. Yeltsin, Gorbachev, and the leaders of other nuclear republics to dismantle their corresponding weapons without going through the delays of arms negotiations and verification protocols is clearly a tantalizing one. There are about 11,000 short-range nuclear weapons on the soil of Russia, Byelorussia, the Ukraine, and Kazakhstan, subject to theft or use for blackmail, or capable of actually being fired in a civil war. They should go.

But the means in this matter may not have been the best ones. Unilateralism is a blunt gambit at the best of times, and it is not completely clear that the nuclear Eurasian republics are unable to negotiate reductions in a more measured way. (It is revealing that, after a delay in responding, the Soviet government has not reciprocated unilaterally, but has called for consultations.) And we have leverage with the republics. Why not make our terms clear: aid to the republics will be contingent upon their signing the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty and acting swiftly to get rid of their nukes?

Other elements of the announcement are more clearly welcome. The colorful, decades-long debate about the basing of ICBMs has thankfully been ended: our long-range missiles will continue to live in their silos, at last relieved of the fear of sudden attack. Even more dramatically, our nuclear-tipped Tomahawk and cruise missiles will be removed from surface warships and attack submarines. Since these missiles were impossible for our enemy to find, they were the guarantors of the retaliation that was at the heart of nuclear deterrence. Their removal is about as clear a sign as we will have that classical postwar deterrence is dead. It served us well, but there is no longer a single, coherent enemy to deter.

If a mere symbol for the relaxation of postwar tension is still needed, it may be found in the grounding of the SAC bombers and the end of their days-long, weeks-long, months-long, years-long, decades-long state of "alert." Those planes forever in the air were the perfect illustration of the nuclear anxiety, and of the slightly absurd (but still ineluctable) rationality with which that anxiety was met. Their grounding is the grounding not just of an airplane, but of an entire generation of strategic thought.

A second portion of the president's announcement—the offer to negotiate a deal with the former Soviet Union to eliminate land-based missiles with multiple warheads (MIRVs)—is something we could have done long before this (and considered doing, but delayed), when there was a more unified center of

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

power in the former Soviet bloc. The arms control environment has changed since the great debates of the last decade: where before there were two superpowers with nuclear weapons, there is now one superpower with nuclear weapons and one collapsing empire with nuclear weapons. Negotiations with the nuclear republics are not impossible, as President Bush's call to Boris Yeltsin after his address suggested, but an agreement may not be easy to reach, for other reasons, not least of which is that the United States wants the Soviets to dismantle double the number of missiles that the United States would, and there would be no cuts in submarine-launched MIRVed missiles, which we have in vastly superior numbers. An obvious deal is for both sides to have equal numbers of single-warhead missiles on land or sea, for the sake of deterrence, but the U.S. Navy is balking. The president should pressure it to accept.

There will be a temptation in some quarters to find in Mr. Bush's actions a confirmation of the old argument for unilateral disarmament. His gesture, after all, bears a striking resemblance to the calls in the early and mid-1980s for a unilateral act by the United States to generate a process of disarmament and peace. But this gets it backward. Global tension was not the consequence of nuclear weaponry. Nuclear weaponry was the consequence of global tension. No tension, no weaponry. Mr. Bush's post-totalitarian unilateralism was made possible precisely by the eschewal of unilateralism in an earlier historical moment. Concretely, it was made possible by NATO's nuclear deployments almost a decade ago, which matched the aggressive deployments of the Soviet Union and convinced its political and military elites that the West had the will, and not just the wherewithal, to call their bluff.

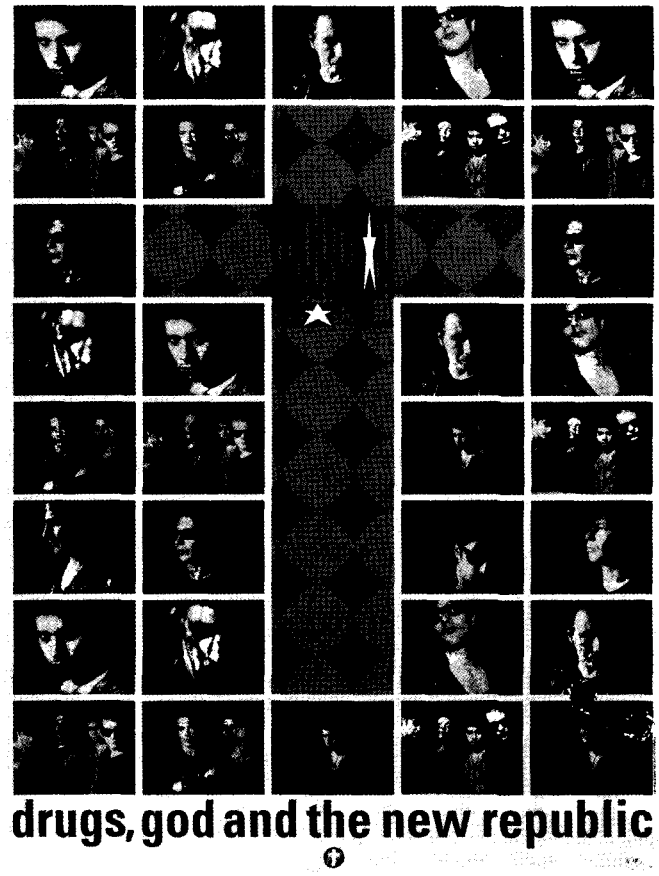
And there will be a desire, encouraged by the president's rhetoric, to revive, however briefly, the fixation with arms control as the key to world peace. This would be a delusion. An old rabbinical saying insists that the Messiah will come when he is no longer needed. Mr. Bush's disarming gesture was acceptable precisely because it was redundant. These arms reductions are the product of political transformations, not their cause.

This is no time to revive the nuclear obsessions of the 1980s. Nor is it time to indulge in fantasies of a perfectly secure new millennium. Russia will remain a nuclear power, and a powerful conventional one. Other powers will emerge as surely as Saddam Hussein's Baath regime. The irony is that Mr. Bush, in his televised address and in his recent speech to the United Nations, seemed to breathe new life into the notions of unilateralism and escapism: that arms control gestures are world-changing events; that a perfectly secure world is somehow within reach; that it can be hastened by unilateral postures; that the nuclear question is the central engine for the easing of world tensions. None of this is true, and reiterating it now may return to haunt George Bush. It may also return to haunt the national security of this country.

NOTEBOOK

FINGERS CROSSED: People rightly get fixated on trouble—Haiti and Croatia, for instance—but there are actual signs of progress this week in two of the bloodiest places on earth: Cambodia and El Salvador. Warring factions in both places have concluded peace agreements brokered by the U.N. and encouraged by the United States. Cambodia in effect will be run by the U.N. for the next two years, with thousands of U.N. troops responsible for disarming the Khmer Rouge and ensuring that the Vietnamese-backed government doesn't bias voting in free elections. The Salvador agreement calls for a cease-fire between the rightist government and Communist FMLN guerrillas and integration of the guerrillas into civilian life. The calm is the result of the United States not giving in to demands that it support the Vietnamese-backed government of Hun Sen as the least of all evils, or withdraw support from elected Salvadoran governments. Both positions took some effort to defend over the last few years; but both seem finally to have paid off.

THE COMPANY WE KEEP:



(recently released album cover, ©1991 The David Geffen Co.)

LADIES FIRST: Perhaps the most gratifying aspect of the recent spate of candidacies for president is the pos-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

sibility (however faint) that the position of First Lady could soon be vacant. Both Douglas Wilder and Bob Kerrey are, like a hefty proportion of Americans, divorced. Jerry Brown (who has yet to declare) has never married. None at present looks likely to go through the arduous process of marital courtship on top of a presidential campaign. Better still, the remaining Democratic candidates have wives with careers. Hillary Rodham Clinton is an attorney with a law firm in Little Rock, Arkansas. Before the campaign, Jiki Sauvage Tsongas was a lawyer in her own firm, Tsongas and Murphy. Ruth Harkin works at the Washington law firm of Akin, Gump. We hesitate, of course, to urge a vote for candidates solely on the basis of this single issue, but it would be hard to overestimate the relief at being spared the mawkish charade of the conventional First Lady, with her pet causes, pet peeves, and pet animals.

A MBIENCE CHASERS:
"What was unusual about Spanish in Miami was not that it was so often spoken, but that it was so often heard: in, say, Los Angeles, Spanish remained a language only barely registered by the Anglo population, part of the ambient noise, the language spoken by the people who worked in the car wash and came to trim the trees and cleared the tables in restaurants." —Joan Didion, *Miami*, 1987

"And in the Anglo neighborhoods, the ambient noise, the Muzak of Los Angeles, is the sound of spoken Spanish." —Her husband, John Gregory Dunne, "Law & Disorder in Los Angeles," *The New York Review of Books*, October 10, 1991

U P THE DOWN STAIRCASE:

Economic Scene | Leonard Silk

Encouraging Clue Points to Recovery

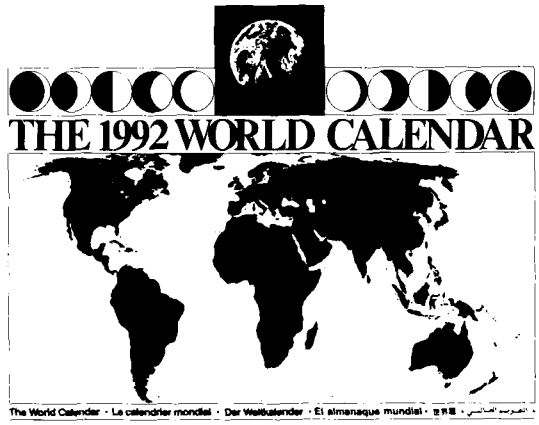
—*The New York Times*, September 6

Data on Jobless Claims Cast Doubt on Recovery

—same paper, same day, same page
(thanks to several readers)

B OOKED: We're delighted to announce that Peter Edidin, former editor of *Psychology Today* and founding editor of *Lingua Franca*, a review of academic life, is now the editor for New Republic Books. He promises to keep the volumes short and meticulously edited.

SPECIAL OFFER: **LE CALENDRIER MONDIAL • DER WELTKALENDER • EL ALMANAQUE MUNDIAL • 世界 • التقويم العالمي**



Includes:

- **Holidays of the world's five major religions – Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hindu, Buddhist – in six languages.**
- **National and bank holidays of a hundred nations.**
- **Each weekday and month in six languages.**
- **Each photo caption in six languages.**
- **An International Time Zone Map.**
- **English radio broadcast frequencies throughout the world.**
- **And an index to help you find and understand celebration days throughout the globe.**

This unique calendar is illustrated with cultural and meaningful photos which reflect the world's diversity of cultural tradition. Each month brings a new theme based on an important cultural or religious motif. The World Calendar is truly the first international calendar. Printed in six languages – English, French, German, Spanish, Japanese, and Arabic – this large (11"x14") calendar will be an attractive addition to any room – whether at home or the office. And it will enrich each day with the wealth of international experience. Perfect for those with international business or interests.

"Our subscribers have found The World Calendar to be an excellent resource for international business and travel."
Bill Bonner, Publisher, International Living

World Calender-EU • c/o Educational Extension Systems • P.O. Box 259 • Clarks Summit, PA 18411 • Toll Free 1-800-447-8561

☐ Please send me (1) calendar at $10.95 plus $3.00 postage ($13.95)
For (2) or more calendars, please send _____ calendars at $10.95 plus $2.00 postage ($12.95)
☐ Check or Purchase Order enclosed. **Phone Orders 1-800-447-8561**
☐ Charge my credit card ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard
Card No. _____ Exp. Date _____

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

HOME NEWS: With this issue, Andrew Sullivan, acting editor, succeeds Hendrik Hertzberg as editor of THE NEW REPUBLIC. Sullivan first joined the magazine in 1986 as a reporter-researcher. He was associate editor from 1987 to 1989, and deputy editor from October 1990 to June 1991. In between, he completed a master's in public administration and a doctorate in political science at Harvard. Hertzberg joins our roster of senior editors. He will be writing regularly on politics and culture, we're glad to say, as well as becoming our occasional television critic.

NAIROBI POSTCARD

C'EST MOI

By Jon Bowermaster

In the early evening of May 29 the government of Kenya unchained Gitobi Imanyara from his Kenyatta National Hospital bed. He'd been tied to it for five weeks, fed just once a day, and allowed to get up only to use the toilet, under the watch of half a dozen guards armed with machine guns. He'd been transferred to the hospital after two months in the psychiatric ward of a Nairobi prison. His crime? He'd published an editorial in his *Nairobi Law Monthly* decrying Kenyan President Daniel arap Moi's habit of filling top government jobs by tribal affiliation rather than professional experience. When the magazine hit the streets of Nairobi, Imanyara's office was ransacked, files were confiscated, and he and a co-editor were "detained" without charge—for Imanyara, the fourth time in the past three years. This seems to be what passes for justice in the country long regarded as Africa's "most democratic."

Since the riots of last summer, which were prompted by the arrest of several prominent Moi critics, the country has come to resemble a police state. Moi's opponents are routinely arrested, detained, even killed. Last July Bishop Alexander Mugi, a vocal critic of Kenya's one-party government, was "mysteriously" mowed down by a truck traveling sixty miles an hour. Former Parliament member George Anyara and three co-conspirators, currently the defendants in a long-running trial in Nairobi, were picked up in a midnight raid on a bar for having an illegal meeting. Simply possessing "seditious" material or flashing the two-finger, i.e., multiparty, sign is enough to get you arrested. (It was proposed last summer by an enlightened Cabinet minister that such agitators have the offending fingers chopped off.) Censorship of local and foreign press is commonplace.

Under Jomo Kenyatta, Kenya's first president after gaining independence in 1963, the country earned a reputation for progress and freedoms then unknown across Africa. Highly regarded by Western leaders, Kenyatta was encouraged with wads of foreign aid, even though he was not above the occasional assassination of a political opponent and his family was intricately involved in ivory smuggling. Vice President Moi took over the presidency in 1978 upon Kenyatta's death and obviously learned well at his mentor's knee, refining Kenyatta's autocratic grip while managing to maintain foreign aid, which today accounts for one-third of Kenya's budget. In recent years Moi has fixed the constitution—imposing single-party rule, abolishing (although later reinstating) secret voting, and giving himself the right to dismiss judges and order prolonged detention without trial.

Corruption is endemic to Moi's government: he and his Cabinet mates skim money off road and housing projects, control Nairobi's casinos, and hit up foreign investors for a piece of any action. As a result, they live in big houses, are chauffeured around in Mercedes Benzs, and own thousands of acres of illegally grabbed farm land and confiscated businesses. It's estimated the president's personal wealth lies somewhere between $100 million and billions—and he's been a public servant since the late 1950s. He is surrounded by loyalists who want to see him kept in power, thereby keeping themselves in the money.

A few burgeoning domestic crises, however, may disrupt Moi's comfortable reign. Inflation is running at 20 to 40 percent; the price of everyday essentials, from gasoline to corn meal (the staple of most Kenyans' diets), has doubled and tripled in recent months. Tourism, the country's biggest lure for foreign dollars, has plummeted. Unemployment in the cities is at an all-time high, driven up by the increasing numbers of rural folk moving to the cities for work that does not exist. Though cranes dot the skyline above Nairobi (building supported almost entirely by foreign aid dollars), the infrastructure below is crumbling. Sidewalks are buckled, streets potholed; when it rains, sewers overflow, forcing residents of tin shack villages to flee as their "homes" flood. Violent crime is rampant. Reported AIDS cases have doubled in the past year.

Most critical, Kenya's population, long the fastest-growing in the world, is expected to double within the next seventeen years. Though marginally more lush than its neighbors to the north, Ethiopia and the Sudan, the country is barely able to feed its current population, estimated at between 26 million and 30 million. Efforts to slow its 3.5 percent annual increase are not working, and government spending on family planning is decreasing. Only 18 percent of women use modern contraception.

One of the least attractive hopes for Kenya's future, increasingly voiced in public by both black and white leaders, is that the flourishing natural plague sweeping Africa will help the country curb its booming population. AIDS is seen by many as a savior rather than a curse, a natural way to slow the growth and allow some

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

breathing room for Kenya's economy to catch up with its numbers. According to recent reports AIDS has claimed more than 17,000 Kenyans, and hundreds of thousands may be HIV positive.

What keeps the *wanachi*—common man—from taking to the streets? Part of the reason is the image broadcast daily on state-owned TV and in the pages of the state-run *Kenya Times* of the horrific strife that dominates Kenya's neighbors. Fifty million in the Horn of Africa are starving; the Sudan, Rwanda, Liberia, Nigeria, Angola, Mozambique, Madagascar are all riddled with internecine warfare—Ethiopia's recently concluded civil war was the longest-running on the globe; in Somalia bodies are lying in the streets. (As a result, Kenya's borders are lined with refugee camps; 67,000 Somalis and Ethiopians are seeking permanent refuge.) In such a sea of turmoil, Moi insists, Kenya is a veritable Club Med.

Moi and his Cabinet ministers also use the threat of "multiparties," or "tribalism," as a weapon to keep down dissent. There are more than forty tribes in Kenya; if elections were opened to them all, says Moi, there would surely be unrest and bloodshed. Moi also likes to blame Kenya's woes on hypocritical "evil foreign masters," i.e., the United States and other Western governments who occasionally demand human rights in return for aid money.

As a result of this propaganda—and the threat of persecution—there is hardly a well-organized opposition. Advocates of a two- or multiparty state are led by 80-year-old former vice president Odinga Odinga and a small band of young lawyers, who are attempting to effect change through the courts—which the president controls. Aside from this small activist opposition, what dissatisfaction is voiced comes from the black middle class, which watches CNN and reads international news stories. There is a small if growing sense among this faction that Kenya needs at least a new president if not a new government. But for now such talk is primarily heard over cocktails, not loudspeakers.

One faction of Kenyans noticeably quiet on the future of the country is the group of 65,000 whites who call it home. They don't want change. And why should they? By Western standards they lead an idyllic life here: the climate is equatorial and the cost of living is cheap; most run household staffs of ten for less than $500 a month. Whites see the pictures of spear-carrying Zulus in South Africa and recoil.

In the past few months some of the more public abuses have been relieved: the best-known detainees—Imanyara and three Nairobi lawyers imprisoned for nearly a year—have been released from detention. (Not coincidentally, shortly after Imanyara was unchained from his hospital bed the U.S. Embassy in Nairobi announced we were forgiving the country $38 million in debt. This is a standard pattern: we withhold aid after one atrocity or another; Kenya gives an inch and we give millions.) More important, in recent weeks one of Moi's most trusted lieutenants, Energy Minister Nicholas Biwott, has been accused of milking foreign investors—a story surprisingly played up in the local papers. It is also rumored that Moi—who rarely talks to the press—is surrounding himself with a new circle of advisers, mostly *mzungas* (whites), putting a layer between himself and the powerful, often vindictive Cabinet ministers. In time-honored African fashion, it may be Moi's lieutenants who become the biggest threat to his stability.

But in typical Kenyan fashion—two steps forward, one step back—the government has taken away Imanyara's passport. In July two political dissidents bound for a human rights conference in London were ordered off a Kenya Airways jet shortly before takeoff, arrested, and their passports confiscated. And now Moi's government has threatened that an October 5 rally planned by the country's main opposition group, Forum for the Restoration of Democracy, will be "crushed." The U.S. Congress is again considering withdrawing all economic and military aid. Few Kenyans miss the irony that just as South Africa is begrudgingly becoming more free, their own rights are more tenuous than ever.

JON BOWERMASTER is writing a book about Kenya.

Government as answering machine.

YOU HAVE REACHED...

By Jonathan Bines

Hello and welcome! If you are calling from a touch-tone phone, please press "1" now.

Oh no! Voice messaging. This happens every time!

Hello and welcome! If you are calling from a touch-tone phone ...

OK, OK, "1."

Welcome to the United States Government main telephone routing and information service. If you know the extension of the person with whom you wish to speak, please enter it at the tone. Otherwise, listen for the number corresponding to the information or service you desire, and select it using the buttons on your touch-tone phone. You need not listen to the entire message before making your selection. If you make a mistake, simply hang up and dial again. If you'd like to speak with a live operator, you are living in a fantasy world. When you are ready to continue, press "1."

"1"

If you need to speak to a member of Congress, press

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

"1"; if you need to speak to someone in the State Department, press "2"; if you need to speak to someone on the Postal Rate Commission, press "3"; if you need information on physical fitness, the Law of the Seas Treaty, or regulations governing interstate transport of human blood and tissue, press "4"; if you need to speak to John Sununu, press "5"; if you worry that the federal government has grown out of touch with the people it purports to serve, press "6"; if you are seeking a grant of limited immunity from prosecution, press "7"; to contest a parking violation on constitutional grounds, press "8." For further options, press "9" now.

"9"

If you require bilingual assistance in filing a request under the Freedom of Information Act, press "1"; if you need to speak to John Sununu on a secured line, press "2"; if you diet and exercise but can't seem to keep the weight off, press "3" . . .

What do you press for an ulcer?

. . . questions concerning invertebrate zoology or ballistics, press "6"; If you need to be connected to the White House, press "7" . . .

Aha! "7"

If you're calling about the room, it's been rented. If you need information about a tour, press "1"; if you know the name of the person you need to speak with, press . . .

"2"

I'm sorry. "2" is not a valid response. If you know the name of the person you need to speak with, press "6."

"6"—of course.

Please determine the first three digits of the person's family name, divide by the prime rate, and add four, then take the cube root and round to three figures or, if you know the person's weight in stone, you may use that number instead.

Uh . . . let's see . . . two, carry the eight . . . where's graph paper when you really need it? . . .

If you need more time, press "1."

Just a second, just a second! Do you round a five up or down? I can never remember. Oh, well—here goes nothing . . . "542."

You have entered the number "542." If this is the number you wished to enter, press "1," if not, press "8."

Yes, yes. "1."

Because it's not too late to change your mind.

I'm sure! I'm sure! "1."

Very well. "542" it is. As I put your call through, let me take some time to inform you of an exciting opportunity available to qualified Americans like yourself to become more fully involved in our national political dialogue, and to receive a free commemorative mahogany paperweight. The "President's V.I.P. Inner Circle Round Table" comprises a select group of leaders whose vision and generosity . . .

Why couldn't it just be Muzak?

. . . Strangers in the night . . .

That does it. I . . . Wait! I hear bells! It's ringing!

Hello, this is George Bush . . .

George, thank God! It's Mikhail! I have urgent news! There's been another coup, and those nukes you want us to get rid of, they're . . . Hey! What do you think you're . . . MMMPH!

. . . I'm not in the White House right now. To leave a message for me, press "1"; for Barbara, press "2"; for Millie, press "3." If you need further assistance, please stay on the line. •

Kimberly Bergalis, AIDS martyr.

THE ACCUSER

By Jacob Weisberg

Last year Robert Montgomery, a West Palm Beach medical malpractice lawyer, took his friend Dr. Sanford Kuvin to the bedside of his client Kimberly Bergalis. Bergalis, not yet a household name, was a 21-year-old graduate of the University of Florida who had been diagnosed as having AIDS, and who claimed to have been infected by her dentist. Montgomery wanted Kuvin, an infectious disease specialist, to say whether her case would stand up in court. After interviewing Bergalis for an hour, Kuvin emerged from her bedroom. "Not only do you have a case," he told Montgomery, "but it's going to change public health policy in America."

"She was totally pristine," Kuvin told me, recalling his first reaction to Bergalis. "She was a virgin. She had never received any blood products. She had never used intravenous drugs." To someone looking at HIV transmission from a medical point of view, it might be difficult to see what Bergalis's sexual purity has to do with the mandatory testing proposal Kuvin has been using Bergalis to promote. If she was not a virgin (and there is some evidence uncovered by the Centers for Disease Control, largely ignored by the press, that suggests she is not), it would not change the reality that, according to DNA tests performed by the CDC, she was infected by her dentist, David Acer. Nor would it affect the public health policy implications that follow from the conclusion that it's possible, if extremely unlikely, for someone to catch HIV from a doctor or dentist.

From a political standpoint, however, it is easy to understand why it was necessary that Kimberly Bergalis be "pristine." To Kuvin and his allies, only such a victim can symbolize the notion that "innocent" people are at risk of catching AIDS. The message of Kimberly Bergalis is that AIDS is not confined to homosexuals, the sexually promiscuous, and underclass drug addicts who deserve their fate. In the Bergalises, Kuvin and Montgomery found a family that accepts

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the premise that there are innocent and guilty victims. "Her sickness would have been easier to accept if she'd been a slut or a drug user," George Bergalis said of his daughter to *People* magazine last year. "But she had everything right." Kimberly Bergalis herself has stressed the point repeatedly. When the CDC first reported that "Patient A" had probably been infected by her dentist, her comment was, "Thank God, now everybody will believe I'm a good girl." She later wrote in a much-quoted open letter to Florida health officials this summer: "Whom do I blame? Do I blame myself? I sure don't. I never used i.v. drugs, never slept with anyone, never had a blood transfusion. I blame Dr. Acer and every one of you bastards.... You are all as guilty as he was."

Bergalis's anger is understandable, just as the anger of the infected members of the gay group ACT-UP is understandable. Yet no member of Congress says that furious gay activists have a unique qualification to speak about the public policy aspects of their disease. To the contrary, homosexuals who claim that all those who did not prevent their infection are murderers are kept far from the hearing room. In Bergalis's case, however, the victim's irrational blasts of rage are taken as sober policy recommendations by legislators who want to make the most of her anomalous tragedy.

The politician who has used Bergalis most extensively is William Dannemeyer, the California representative. Dannemeyer, who has declared his 1992 candidacy for the Senate, is the author of *Shadow on the Land*, a book that attempts to expose the baneful influence of homosexuals on American life and goes on to argue that homosexuality is a curable psychological illness. Dannemeyer is known for his unscientific views, including the notion that "spores" emitted by AIDS victims can cause birth defects (1985) and that HIV can be transmitted by deep kissing (1988). In the past he has distinguished between homosexuals and "decent people who acquired the virus innocently." Bergalis perfectly fits into the latter category of his AIDS cosmology. Unlike Ryan White, the highly publicized young hemophiliac who died in 1990, Bergalis has not muddied the waters by becoming a spokesman for fellow AIDS sufferers. To the delight of Dannemeyer, she has directed all of her remaining energy against other people with AIDS and those she considers their allies.

Dannemeyer's views take concrete form in the Kimberly Bergalis Patient and Health Provider Protection Act of 1991. The bill would require doctors and dentists to be tested for HIV and hepatitis B, and would prohibit those infected from performing invasive surgical procedures without first informing their patients and obtaining written consent. This would have the intended effect of putting them out of work. The bill would also require the screening of patients for AIDS.

With the exception of Kuvin, who along with Mike Franc of Dannemeyer's staff is the author of the Bergalis bill, the medical profession views it as ill-conceived. In the opinion of C. Everett Koop, the former surgeon general, "The Florida case is too bizarre to be helpful in making public policy." Acer, who infected as many as five people in Florida, is the only proven case of a health care worker infecting a patient. No one knows how he spread his infection; one theory is that he did it intentionally; another is that he did not bother to sterilize his tools or use gloves. Yet the Bergalis bill would go to great lengths to prevent a recurrence of what may well be a freak accident. Though there is no convincing evidence that it would save a single life, Dannemeyer's bill has been estimated to cost as much as $1 billion. Dannemeyer himself, whose usual complaint is that too much is being spent on the "privileged disease" of AIDS, says he has no idea what the testing program would cost.

Thanks to the Bergalises, Dannemeyer was able to float his proposal on a tidal wave of publicity. Stories about Bergalis appeared on the cover of *People* and *USA Today* (which ran an additional story about medical transmission of AIDS titled "Guarding the Innocent"). George Bergalis and Kuvin appeared on nearly every major television talk show, from "Today" to "Good Morning America" to "Crossfire." To ensure that the hype continues after Bergalis dies, her family has retained Lee Blessing, the author of *A Walk in the Woods*, to write a play about them, and according to Montgomery they are negotiating to have Blessing act as an agent for the film and book rights to the story. Their cause has been promoted by Shepherd Smith of Americans for a Sound AIDS policy, a Washington-area group that advocates testing, and Colonel Robert Redfield, who heads the U.S. military's AIDS program.

At the height of the media feeding frenzy, Dannemeyer invited the Bergalises to testify in favor of the bill before the House Health and Environment subcommittee. Though Bergalis cannot walk and can barely talk, her dying wish, according to her parents, was to come to Washington to speak in favor of mandatory testing. Another wish was to make an arduous journey to Washington by train. Along with dozens of reporters and cameramen, the seventy-pound Bergalis and her mother made the twenty-hour trip on September 24. Bergalis's testimony was broadcast in full by all three networks and reported on the front page of most major newspapers. "I'd like to say that AIDS is a terrible disease which we must take seriously. I did nothing wrong, yet I'm being made to suffer like this," she said. "My life has been taken away. Please enact legislation so that no other patient or health care provider will have to go through the hell that I have."

The dying Bergalis was followed by her father, who spoke at greater length, in somewhat darker terms, of "ten years of protection, of covert action, of unwillingness to address the real issue." He said that AIDS should be treated as a medical emergency, not a civil rights issue. "I'm not a medical professional, I'm not a scientist, I'm not a politician, a civil libertarian, or a

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

homosexual," he said. George Bergalis's paranoia, his ill-concealed bigotry, and the sickening spectacle of his dying daughter being dragged to Washington seemed only to rouse the Republicans on the committee, who responded with a series of pandering non-questions. Like Dannemeyer, they seemed delighted to have finally found an AIDS patient they could embrace.

Kuvin also came to Washington to testify in favor of the bill. He said that no precautions, however painstaking, could prevent future Kimberlys from being infected if HIV-infected doctors and dentists continued to perform invasive procedures. Kuvin had hoped to take the train to Washington to be with Kimberly on her final trip. But he decided to fly so he wouldn't miss a chance to appear on "Oprah." •

Are the settlements legal?

RESOLVED

By Eugene V. Rostow

Assuming the Middle East conference actually does take place, its official task will be to achieve peace between Israel and its Levantine neighbors in accordance with Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. Resolution 242, adopted after the Six-Day War in 1967, sets out criteria for peace-making by the parties; Resolution 338, passed after the Yom Kippur War in 1973, makes Resolution 242 legally binding and orders the parties to carry out its terms forthwith. Unfortunately, confusion reigns, even in high places, about what those resolutions require.

For twenty-four years Arab states have pretended that the two resolutions are "ambiguous" and can be interpreted to suit their desires. And some European, Soviet, and even American officials have cynically allowed Arab spokesmen to delude themselves and their people—to say nothing of Western public opinion—about what the resolutions mean. It is common even for American journalists to write that Resolution 242 is "deliberately ambiguous," as though the parties are equally free to rely on their own reading of its key provisions.

Nothing could be further from the truth. Resolution 242, which as undersecretary of state for political affairs between 1966 and 1969 I helped produce, calls on the parties to make peace and allows Israel to administer the territories it occupied in 1967 until "a just and lasting peace in the Middle East" is achieved. When such a peace is made, Israel is required to withdraw its armed forces "from territories" it occupied during the Six-Day War—not from "the" territories, nor from "all" the territories, but from some of the territories, which included the Sinai Desert, the West Bank, the Golan Heights, East Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip.

Five-and-a-half months of vehement public diplomacy in 1967 made it perfectly clear what the missing definite article in Resolution 242 means. Ingeniously drafted resolutions calling for withdrawal from "all" the territories were defeated in the Security Council and the General Assembly. Speaker after speaker made it explicit that Israel was not to be forced back to the "fragile" and "vulnerable" Armistice Demarcation Lines, but should retire once peace was made to what Resolution 242 called "secure and recognized" boundaries, agreed to by the parties. In negotiating such agreements, the parties should take into account, among other factors, security considerations, access to the international waterways of the region, and, of course, their respective legal claims.

Resolution 242 built on the text of the Armistice Agreements of 1949, which provided (except in the case of Lebanon) that the Armistice Demarcation Lines separating the military forces were "not to be construed in any sense" as political or territorial boundaries, and that "no provision" of the Armistice Agreements "shall in any way prejudice the rights, claims, and positions" of the parties "in the ultimate peaceful settlement of the Palestine problem." In making peace with Egypt in 1979, Israel withdrew from the entire Sinai, which had never been part of the British Mandate. For security it depended on patrolled demilitarization and the huge area of the desert rather than on territorial change. As a result, more than 90 percent of the territories Israel occupied in 1967 are now under Arab sovereignty. It is hardly surprising that some Israelis take the view that such a transfer fulfills the territorial requirements of Resolution 242, no matter how narrowly they are construed.

Resolution 242 leaves the issue of dividing the occupied areas between Israel and its neighbors entirely to the agreement of the parties in accordance with the principles it sets out. It was, however, negotiated with full realization that the problem of establishing "a secure and recognized" boundary between Israel and Jordan would be the thorniest issue of the peace-making process. The United States has remained firmly opposed to the creation of a third Palestinian state on the territory of the Palestine Mandate. An independent Jordan or a Jordan linked in an economic union with Israel is desirable from the point of view of everybody's security and prosperity. And a predominantly Jewish Israel is one of the fundamental goals of Israeli policy. It should be possible to reconcile these goals by negotiation, especially if the idea of an economic union is accepted.

The Arabs of the West Bank could constitute the population of an autonomous province of Jordan or of Israel, depending on the course of the negotiations. Provisions for a shift of populations or, better still, for

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE NEW REPUBLIC CASUAL • COLLECTION

For a limited time, order customized sportswear designed and manufactured in The New Republic tradition of quality.

SWEATSHIRT:
Nutmeg Mills' long sleeve crewneck sweatshirt is specially processed to create a unique, weathered appearance. A full oversized body cut in a blend of 80% cotton/20% poly minimizes shrinkage. Available in khaki with The New Republic and logo silkscreened in navy, or in navy with white graphics.

Sizes L, XL. **91W-01**
$39.95 (Add $4.95 for shipping)

SWEATER:
Classic good looks and timeless style make this staggered cable, 100% cotton, v-neck sweater from Nutmeg Mills the perfect addition to any casual wardrobe. Navy stripes accent the neck[illegible] and The New Republic logo is embroidered in na[illegible] and natural on the left chest.

Sizes S, M, L, XL. **91W-02**
$59.95 (Add $4.95 for shipping)

To order, call toll-fr[illegible]
1-800-767-740[illegible]
(24 hours a day)

Name _____

Phone _____

Shipping Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Mail this form along with check or money order made payable to **The New Republic, P.O. Box 797831, Dallas, Texas 75379.**

Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery.

Item #	Size	Color	Description	Qty.	Unit Price	Total

If using Visa, Mastercard or American Express, please provide the following information:

Account Number _____

Expiration Date _____

Signature _____

Sub Total	
6% Sales Tax (D.C. Residents only)	
Shipping	
Total	

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

individual self-determination are a possible solution for those West Bank Arabs who would prefer to live elsewhere. All these approaches were explored in 1967 and 1968. One should note, however, that Syria cannot be allowed to take over Jordan and the West Bank, as it tried to do in 1970.

The heated question of Israel's settlements in the West Bank during the occupation period should be viewed in this perspective. The British Mandate recognized the right of the Jewish people to "close settlement" in the whole of the Mandated territory. It was provided that local conditions might require Great Britain to "postpone" or "withhold" Jewish settlement in what is now Jordan. This was done in 1922. But the Jewish right of settlement in Palestine *west* of the Jordan river, that is, in Israel, the West Bank, Jerusalem, and the Gaza Strip, was made unassailable. That right has never been terminated and cannot be terminated except by a recognized peace between Israel and its neighbors. And perhaps not even then, in view of Article 80 of the U.N. Charter, "the Palestine article," which provides that "nothing in the Charter shall be construed ... to alter in any manner the rights whatsoever of any states or any peoples or the terms of existing international instruments...."

Some governments have taken the view that under the Geneva Convention of 1949, which deals with the rights of civilians under military occupation, Jewish settlements in the West Bank are illegal, on the ground that the Convention prohibits an occupying power from flooding the occupied territory with its own citizens. President Carter supported this view, but President Reagan reversed him, specifically saying that the settlements are legal but that further settlements should be deferred since they pose a psychological obstacle to the peace process.

In any case, the issue of the legality of the settlements should not come up in the proposed conference, the purpose of which is to end the military occupation by making peace. When the occupation ends, the Geneva Convention becomes irrelevant. If there is to be any division of the West Bank between Israel and Jordan, the Jewish right of settlement recognized by the Mandate will have to be taken into account in the process of making peace.

This reading of Resolution 242 has always been the keystone of American policy. In launching a major peace initiative on September 1, 1982, President Reagan said, "I have personally followed and supported Israel's heroic struggle for survival since the founding of the state of Israel thirty-four years ago: in the pre-1967 borders, Israel was barely ten miles wide at its narrowest point. The bulk of Israel's population lived within artillery range of hostile Arab armies. I am not about to ask Israel to live that way again."

Yet some Bush administration statements and actions on the Arab-Israeli question, and especially Secretary of State James Baker's disastrous speech of May 22, 1989, betray a strong impulse to escape from the resolutions as they were negotiated, debated, and adopted, and award to the Arabs all the territories between the 1967 lines and the Jordan river, including East Jerusalem. The Bush administration seems to consider the West Bank and the Gaza Strip to be "foreign" territory to which Israel has no claim. Yet the Jews have the same right to settle there as they have to settle in Haifa. The West Bank and the Gaza Strip were never parts of Jordan, and Jordan's attempt to annex the West Bank was not generally recognized and has now been abandoned. The two parcels of land are parts of the Mandate that have not yet been allocated to Jordan, to Israel, or to any other state, and are a legitimate subject for discussion.

The American position in the coming negotiations should return to the fundamentals of policy and principle that have shaped American policy toward the Middle East for three-quarters of a century. Above all, rising above irritation and pique, it should stand as firmly for fidelity to law in dealing with the Arab-Israeli dispute as President Bush did during the Gulf war. Fidelity to law is the essence of peace, and the only practical rule for making a just and lasting peace.

EUGENE V. ROSTOW is a Distinguished Fellow at the United States Institute of Peace.

Sexism in the Air Force.

G.I. JILL

By Cynthia Wright

It might seem as though the Gulf war did a lot for women in the military. The public is now used to seeing them as full-fledged soldiers, and the combat exclusion rule has finally been rewritten. But the war did little to remove the most stubborn barrier to female acceptance in the military: the antiquated views of military men—and women. The social, workday realities of women who have chosen a military career have not only failed to improve significantly in recent years, in some respects they have also deteriorated. Nowhere is this more obvious than in the military service academies.

You are probably familiar with the recent case of the female midshipman at Annapolis who was handcuffed to a urinal while her male peers jeered and took photographs. If you follow this sort of thing regularly you will even have heard of last fall's scandal at the U.S. Air Force Academy, in which several male cadets hid in a closet to watch one of their friends have sex with a female cadet without her knowledge of their presence—a practice that is apparently common enough to have

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

acquired the name "rodeo," based on the object of the game, which is for the male cadet to remain "mounted" for as long as possible after the closet voyeurs have leapt from concealment. In this particular instance, the men never did reveal themselves, and the woman returned to her room, unaware of the "joke" until the next day.

Another prank of the military leaders of tomorrow is the practice of referring to female midshipmen as WUBAS—an acronym supposedly derived from Working Uniform, Blue Alpha, but now commonly, if clandestinely, recognized to stand for Women Used By All. This sort of low-level harassment is so frequent that it's considered normal and isn't even reported in most instances.

Unfortunately, the cadets are not the only perpetrators. At the end of their freshman year, the women of the Air Force Academy's class of 1993 attended a mandatory briefing titled "Professional Issues." Among the issues discussed were the techniques of effective makeup application, the importance of not swearing or crying in public, the necessity of a periodic eyebrow-waxing, and a just-between-us-girls warning about the damage to one's reputation if one were to be suspected of "sleeping around." In the same breath, they were warned that boys will be boys and that they were unlikely to see those same moral standards upheld by their male peers. Finally, they were given, as a class, diet tips for maintaining "all those curves they [the male cadets] like"—this in an environment that already produces a significantly higher incidence of bulimia than at other colleges and universities.

Perhaps most disconcerting, this briefing was organized by a female Air Force Academy graduate and conducted by several other female officers, all of whom were stationed at the academy, and all but one of whom occupied positions as either academic instructors or commanding officers of cadet squadrons. The "tips" were presented as though they provided these young women—few of whom had any experience in the military beyond their first year of academy training—with all the tools and insights they would require in order to negotiate successfully the pitfalls of their military career. The best strategy, apparently, is to get a skirt and a nice pair of pumps.

This emphasis on sexuality also persists in the "real" military world. Regulations require that military women style their hair so as to "present a feminine appearance." Sexual harassment is also widespread outside of the academies. In a recent survey conducted by the Pentagon, 64 percent of military women cited on-the-job harassment, compared with 30 to 40 percent of women in the civilian work force.

One underlying motivation for the emphasis on traditional gender-related behavior may be the military's continuing and all-pervading fear of homosexuals, and the association of stereotypical femininity with a healthy and decent heterosexual orientation. It's unfortunately not all that surprising that the very qualities that make up that femininity are the same ones that men don't want on the battlefield with them.

But women also play a part in perpetuating these obstacles. According to a study conducted by Major Karen O. Dunnivin, USAF, which appeared in the summer 1988 issue of *Minerva*, a magazine for women in the military, "Women seem to fear that a separate women's identity would hurt women's integration in the Air Force [and] would be seen as counterproductive or even subversive." Many therefore tend to adopt the attitudes of their male peers—who, after all, make up nearly 90 percent of the Armed Forces—toward other females. At the same time, they try not to include themselves in the same category with those women. In response to the continual stream of derogatory remarks, many women deceive themselves into believing that the gibes apply only to "other" women, who undoubtedly did something to deserve them. Betty Friedan described this as the three-sex theory: "There's men, there's women, and there's me."

This dissociation from other women makes any sort of supportive networking difficult at best. Added to this is the fact that any time their male counterparts see a group of women together they automatically construe the gathering as an incipient revolt—the first stirrings of a plot to overthrow the good old boys.

Some fairly representative responses to a reader's poll conducted in 1989 by *Military Lifestyle* suggest how deeply ingrained is the continued resistance to women in the military. One retired male servicemember states:

> The presence of women in military uniform has been instrumental in deterring many fine young men from the military. Men who like women resent their presence in an organization which has been a man's domain.

From a male servicemember, 29:

> The effect of women on the military is negative—negative on morale, negative on discipline, negative on the self-esteem of their male counterparts. Plus they generally look ridiculous in [battle dress uniforms]. On deployments, most foreign nationals are smirking.

And here's a comment from one female spouse, 38:

> Women in the military are usually after our husbands. Most of the women are daughters of military; little girls trying to please their daddies. Most of the women are more masculine than feminine, and frequently are queer.

One thing you can say for women in the Armed Services: we must have the best time-management systems in the corporate-military world. After all, it's a rare employee who can carry on clandestine lesbian affairs, chase other women's husbands, curry favor with the boss, undermine morale and discipline, serve as tokens, lower physical standards, foment feminist revolutions, hold down a ten-hour-a-day job—and still find time to get her eyebrows waxed.

CYNTHIA WRIGHT is an officer in the Air Force. The views expressed are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Air Force or the U.S. government.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Bill Clinton, postliberal man.

SLICK WILLY

By Morton Kondracke

LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS

You'd expect a governor of Arkansas to become president of the United States about as soon as a great world statesman would emerge from Bolivia or Portugal. Arkansas is small, rural, poor, and far from the center of national, or even regional, action. The state has only 2.4 million people, not many more than the city of Houston. Governor Bill Clinton, who wants to be president, commands a state budget of $3.5 billion, smaller than that of the District of Columbia and one-500th that of the federal government. Though Clinton says America's task in the 1990s is to ensure its workers world-class jobs in the face of sophisticated competition, Arkansas has no major high-tech industries. Its major products are poultry, paper, and natural gas. Its per capita income is $14,200, the third lowest in the United States. The capital, Little Rock, has but one real skyscraper, thirty-four stories tall, the headquarters of the TCBY Yogurt Co.

If Bill Clinton has a real shot at the Democratic nomination, it is because he has transcended his base. In eleven years as governor, at the age of 44, he has gained a national reputation for innovation in state government, especially in education. He has chaired national governors' task forces on education, welfare, and health care reform. More important, he is urging a postliberal agenda for the Democrats, conceived by the Democratic Leadership Council that he formerly headed and designed to win back middle-class white voters who have fled to the Republicans. He's also good-looking, affable, and smart, and though he grew up in Hope, Arkansas, he has access to what George Bush derides as the famed Harvard Boutique: his advisers include the economist (and TNR contributing editor) Robert B. Reich and Representatives Stephen Solarz and Les Aspin. He is a former Rhodes scholar and a Yale Law School graduate.

Clinton is known to the general public, if at all, for his legendarily bad speech to the 1988 Democratic convention (when the only applause he got was for the words "in conclusion"). In fact he is a compelling orator and has now got himself a cracking good speech. He delivered it at a Democratic National Committee meeting recently in Los Angeles and was treated to whoops from the floor as he sounded themes that were both shrewd and distinctively Democratic. He blasted Bush's notion that foreign and domestic policy can easily be separated. The past decade, he argued, "proves that national security begins at home. For the Soviet empire did not ever lose to us on the field of battle. It rotted from the inside out, from economic failure, from political failure.... You don't have to be an isolationist or a protectionist to know that if you're not strong enough to take care of your own folks, you can't do the first thing for anybody else."

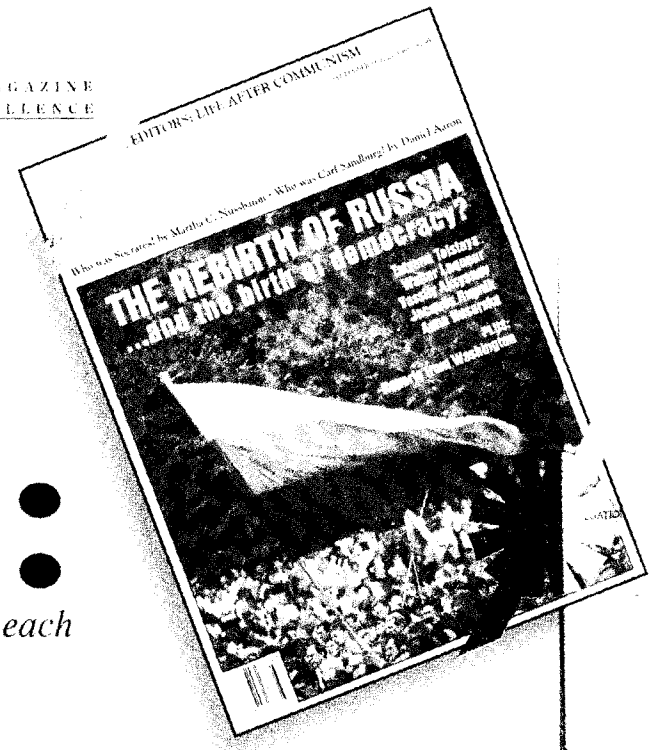
He called for "every last American citizen to assume personal responsibility for the future of this country" and proposed a major overhaul of the health care system to reduce costs and extend insurance to each citizen, a domestic GI bill to allow anybody to finance his or her way through college (paid back in money or national service), and a thorough reform of welfare programs to break the culture of dependency. But this realism was matched by a gripping injunction in the old Democratic mode. After a Clarence Thomas-like spiel about the role of his grandparents in bringing him up in the rural South, Clinton perorated: "It is a long, long way in this country from ... me at the age of 6 holding my great-granddaddy's hand to a condition where children on the streets of this city don't know who their grandparents are and have to worry about their own parents' drug abuse. I tell you, my friends, if we cannot make common cause with those kids, we cannot keep the American Dream alive for any of us."

Does the record match the rhetoric? The answer's a maybe. Despite his education policy experiments as Arkansas's governor, Clinton has few dramatic results to show in terms of student test scores and poverty reduction. Although his state gained manufacturing jobs while the nation as a whole lost them, there are still embarrassing scenes of destitution in the heavily black counties of the Mississippi Delta and of pollution around the hog and chicken processing plants in Fort Smith. Meanwhile, Clinton is the object of a vicious hometown-bred rumor campaign alleging that he is a sexual libertine—an Ozark Gary Hart—whose campaign will explode in a spray of scandal. The rumors come from two local cranks—a right-wing kook fired from his state job for using his official phone to make calls lobbying for the Nicaraguan contras, and a bankrupt restaurant owner—but they have been spread by Clinton's 1990 Republican opponent for governor,

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Special Holiday gift offer!

WINNER 1991 NATIONAL MAGAZINE AWARD FOR GENERAL EXCELLENCE



Give:

$69.97 for the first gift (or your own renewal)

Receive:

Savings over 35% off the basic $69.97 price for each additional gift—only $44.95

ACT NOW . . . for fastest service call toll free 1-800-274-6350 offer expires December 31, 1991!

The nation's hottest journal of politics, ideas and culture, *THE NEW REPUBLIC* makes an enlightening gift.

For someone who shares your quest for intelligent, provocative reading, there's no better way to say "Happy Holidays."

A welcome challenge for curious minds, your gift of *THE NEW REPUBLIC* will compliment your friends ... and remind them of your thoughtfulness throughout the year.

Your friends will appreciate *THE NEW REPUBLIC* for the same reasons you do. And you'll appreciate our special holiday rates.

Gift subscription form

GIFT FOR

NAME *(please print)*

ADDRESS

CITY/STATE/ZIP

GIFT FOR

NAME *(please print)*

ADDRESS

CITY/STATE/ZIP

☐ Include my own subscription at special holiday rates: ☐ New ☐ Renewal

☐ Payment enclosed ☐ Bill me later

☐ Please charge my: ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Amer. Express

Account #

Expiration Date

Signature

Attractive gift cards will be sent in your name. NEW gifts begin with first January issue. Renewed subscriptions take effect after current subscription expires.

FROM

MY NAME *(please print)*

ADDRESS

CITY/STATE/ZIP

Return this coupon to:

THE NEW REPUBLIC
P.O. Box 52333
Boulder, CO 80321-2333

21AD7

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

former Democrat Sheffield Nelson.

The ex-contra backer, Larry Nichols, has filed lawsuits naming at least ten women as Clinton paramours. Local reporters tracking the charges have found no evidence to corroborate them. The restaurateur, Robert McIntosh, has distributed handbills printed on the back of his barbecue menu that Clinton is the father of a black child. There is no evidence for this either. But, fed to the national press by Nelson, the stories cause Clinton trouble. He formerly told local reporters to mind their own business. He now says his marriage "has had difficulties" in the past and that "if the standard is perfection, I can't pass." Just as Nelson intends, the issue seems unlikely to go away.

A more relevant question, though, is whether Clinton has the toughness to take on the party's liberal wing. Some of his DLC backers worry that although he stands for the right things—workfare, public school choice, free trade with Mexico—he will be cowed by his consultants (pollster Stan Greenberg and media expert Frank Greer) to appease the old guard and concentrate on populist appeals, Bush-bashing, and promises of middle-class tax relief to compete for the support of traditional Democratic primary voters. Clinton admitted to supporters that he should have been more feisty in Sioux City, Iowa, on September 6, when he helped Tom Harkin pay tribute to George McGovern (on whose campaign Clinton worked in 1972) and uttered not a peep about the dangers of isolationism. Clinton did agree to snub Jesse Jackson by not inviting him to the DLC's convention this summer, but he wouldn't denounce any of Jackson's policies. When he got into a spat with Mario Cuomo over whether New York City was a good place for Democrats to hold their convention next year, Clinton pulled back from a battle. Clinton says he is unafraid of debate but that he will wait until he is attacked before hitting back.

BILL CLINTON BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Editors and community activists in Arkansas say they can think of only one case when Clinton really went to the mat with an interest group—in 1983, when he fought the Arkansas Education Association and pushed through a requirement that all teachers take a minimum competency test. Though the test was pitched at an eighth-grade reading level, some 1,300 teachers failed or quit, and the union forgave Clinton only this year, when he got teachers a 10 percent raise. But when the International Paper Co. threatened to leave the state, he gave all industries a 7 percent tax break on new investments, for a total loss in revenue of $100 million since 1985. This year he compromised with the state legislature on sales taxes, agreeing to a half-cent increase for education instead of going for a full cent and removing regressive taxes on food. Arkansas has the lowest natural gas severance taxes of any energy state, and critics say Clinton has done little to raise it. Arkansas's constitution requires a three-fourths majority vote of the legislature to effect a change, but Clinton has tried only once to get the constitution amended, and he did not fight hard for that.

The key to Clinton's prudence is the trauma of his first term, in 1979 and 1980, when he tried to enact a broad reform agenda. He was thwarted by the legislature and defeated for re-election. Since his return to office in 1982, he has pushed one major issue per legislative session, often responding to national fashions. In 1983 it was education; in 1985, economic development; in 1987, ethics; in 1989, drugs; in 1991, education again, and children's health. Each time he's balked at ruffling powerful interests and gained a little more of what he wanted. As a result, his campaign will be backed by the state's big money men: natural gas tycoon Whit Stephens and poultry king Don Tyson. Clinton's 1990 Democratic primary opponent, Tom McRae, calls him "wishy washy Willy," and John Robert Starr, managing editor of the *Arkansas Democrat*, says, "The word for him is 'wimp.'"

Clinton told me he has opposed special interests, including the livestock industry, timber companies, natural gas producers, and the National Rifle Association—by twice vetoing a bill banning municipal gun controls. But he said his aim is to get laws passed, not to make enemies. He said he has tried repeatedly to raise severance taxes and make the Arkansas tax system less regressive but that the votes simply aren't there. He said that progress is being made in environmental cleanup, that

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

he's brought in a national panel to recommend changes in Arkansas's juvenile justice and child welfare systems, and that he hopes Republicans do try to make an issue of poverty in the Mississippi Delta. "I'll show what we're doing in child health and early childhood education," he said.

Clinton is strongest on education. He instituted minimum curriculum standards in 1983, periodic testing and state intervention to improve schools whose students don't pass, and testing requirements for promotion in the fourth, eighth, and eleventh grades. He also increased funding and cut class size in lower grades, though teacher salaries were the lowest of any state in the country until this year, when they moved to forty-fourth. Arkansas has an alternative certification program for teachers and has school choice within school districts. Still, some claim testing standards are too low and that teachers spend too much time drilling children to pass tests. Average ACT scores have remained flat for a decade, as they have elsewhere. Graduation rates have improved to one of the best levels in the South, but Arkansas also has the highest percentage of college freshmen requiring remedial help.

Clinton has next to no foreign policy experience other than leading state trade missions abroad. He is the only Democrat in the field to have supported President Bush on the Gulf war, but he did so fuzzily. Paul Greenberg, editor of the *Pine Bluff Commercial*, unearthed an Associated Press dispatch dated January 15 quoting Clinton as saying he would have voted "with the minority" on the bill. Noting that Clinton has been saying he would have voted with Bush, Greenberg wrote, "We don't call him slick Willy for nothing." But Clinton says that AP misquoted him and that other papers reported he would have voted with Bush. The *Arkansas Gazette* quoted him saying, "I guess I would have voted with the majority if it was a close vote. But I agree with the arguments the minority made." Clinton's position was, in effect, a waffle that managed to land on the right side.

As his L.A. speech showed, however, Clinton is much more committed than any of his current rivals to the notion of American leadership in the world. And, unlike Harkin, he admits that Democratic dogma hasn't been selling. He says, "Too many middle-class Americans don't trust us to defend our national interests abroad, to put their values into our social policy at home, or to take their tax money and spend it with discipline." Clinton proposes, borrowing from the DLC's Progressive Policy Institute, to reduce the federal deficit by holding total spending to the level of increase of per capita income. Revenues would grow faster with rising population. He'd allow deficit spending only for investments such as infrastructure and education, and would cut entitlements (including Social Security) for the affluent.

To bolster his postliberal image, Clinton makes a big point of saying that citizens have responsibilities as well as rights. In Arkansas there are penalties for welfare recipients who try to duck the mandatory work requirement, and the state's workfare scheme was recently rated by the respected Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation among the three best in the country in cutting the number of people on welfare. (The reduction was still only 7 percent.) Clinton has also started a system whereby unwed mothers can put the name of a child's father on birth certificates, allowing authorities to pursue fathers for child support. And Arkansas denies driver's licenses to school dropouts who can't prove hardship and penalizes parents who don't show up for school conferences in cases of truancy. Finally, Clinton supports the death penalty and has signed death warrants for thirty people, two of whom have been executed during his tenure.

What makes him a Democrat? The most telling evidence is his avowal that government can accomplish important social goals, that in key areas—fiscal responsibility, educational opportunity, proposals to rescue the underclass—there is no substitute for it. There's also the notion of civic responsibility that taps into popular worries about domestic decay. And Clinton has a populist touch as well: "Do you know that in the 1980s, while middle-class income went down, charitable giving by working people went up, and while rich people's income went up, charitable giving by rich people went down?" he intoned in L.A. "Why? Because we live in a country which had an ethic of get it while you can and to heck with everybody else." It's a class-war oration, which deftly dissipates into sturdy calls for a revived citizenship.

His basic technique, though, is to steal the word "opportunity" back from the Republicans. His major plank is better education, from expanding college scholarships to creating apprenticeship schemes for youngsters not going to college. (Arkansas started such programs this year.) To boost U.S. investment, the key to improving America's competitive position in world markets, Clinton wants targeted capital gains tax cuts and investment tax credits. "I'm not one of these soak-the-rich fellas," he says, but he's still inclined to raise taxes on the wealthy to give a tax break to the middle class. Instead of raising the minimum wage to aid the poor, he'd expand the Earned Income Tax Credit and child exemptions.

Clinton's message has every sign of being the right one; and his oratory suggests the messenger may be the right one too. But his record is on the thin side; and there are real doubts about whether he has the guts to take on the liberal wing of the party, and whether, if he does, primary voters won't desert him. The dilemma is a difficult one, and it will take a certain political toughness to resolve it. And Clinton's toughness is not that evident. He is a likable man who likes to be liked. He is an innovator, but not a china-breaker. And in 1988, we should remember, his big moment at the Democratic convention was to give the nominating speech for Michael Dukakis. •

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

THE PRIMAL SCREAM

By Sidney Blumenthal

"Bullshit!" shouts Tom Harkin about George Bush's policies. Harkin does not say this in the privacy of his Senate office, or among his trusted intimates. He exclaims it from every podium, before every crowd he addresses. "Bullshit. Bullshit. Bullshit." In red letters, the epithet is even imprinted by the candidate with a rubber stamp on scraps of paper on his desk. "Bullshit. Bullshit. Bullshit."

This is more than a less than subtle critique. It is a primal scream, the first thing that any Democrat has said in recent memory that spontaneously provokes a heartfelt response from the party faithful. The congressional leadership eyes with wariness the contentiousness of the Iowan senator. But breaking through the niceties of bipartisan etiquette to savage the opposition is essential to the backbencher's appeal. He practices a deeply rooted politics of frustration, still echoing with the populist oratory of William Jennings Bryan, that has been suddenly galvanized again.

Just as general elections are referendums on the past president, party primaries are judgments on the previous candidate. To that degree, Tom Harkin's anger is a function of Michael Dukakis's passivity. In the Democratic primaries of 1988, many voters (and even more activists) put aside their hearts and followed what they thought was their heads to make the passionless decision to nominate Dukakis. These former Dukakis supporters now feel badly used and betrayed, an inexpressible rage bottled inside them. They are highly susceptible to a candidate who offers the chance to accomplish at least a short-term objective with their primary vote: emotional gratification by restoring passion to Democratic politics and ripping apart George Bush, who had escaped a fair contest before.

The impulse for this sort of campaign is strongly seeded in the party. In 1984 Walter Mondale ran a modulated campaign until two weeks before the end. Hopelessly behind, he was free to return to his upper-Midwestern populism. At last he let loose a primal scream. In 1988 Dukakis, though determined to avoid Mondale's fate, repeated the pattern exactly, compelled, with two weeks remaining, to mimic the populist cry: "On Your Side." Harkin, less imperious and timorous than Mondale or Dukakis, is running from the beginning the campaign they were forced to run at the close.

One reason Harkin decided to run was that his rhetoric produced volcanic eruptions from Democratic crowds. Even he has seemed slightly surprised. But unlike the consultants who serve as permanent advisers to the party in Washington, Harkin revels in the outpouring of the hot lava. "They're responding to someone who knows who he is," said Harkin, "who knows what he believes, and knows why he's a Democrat and isn't, by God, afraid to say so. They're responding to someone or a message they wished they'd had in 1988. There's a real feeling among Democrats that we got cheated in 1988. We got cheated because someone ran a dirty campaign and we didn't fight back. And it's sort of been simmering there all this time. And they want George Bush to pay."

Harkin is tapping into some of the same boiling rage of Dukakis reaction that John Silber drew upon. Silber, the contemptuous, misogynist president of Boston University, captured the Democratic nomination for governor of Massachusetts before his personality undid him. Harkin may be plumbing the same well of anger, but his message for Democrats could not be more contrary to Silber's. Harkin would not see his rise as a rejection of the party, but as its redemption. His criticism is not that the Democrats need a whole new set of principles; they have fallen, according to Harkin, because they haven't stood by their time-honored values. He is proud of being unreconstructed. His implicit theme amid a seemingly endless recession is: We told you so.

The greatest windfall for Harkin might be the growing fear of the future. With every poll the percentages believing that the country is on the wrong track are piling up into majorities; every measure of consumer confidence shows decline. Dukakis's promise (unrealized, of course) was to establish continuity between Democratic verities and a thriving postindustrial economy. Harkin discards the synthesis. There is no Massachusetts miracle, or any miracle, especially for the constituencies at the Democratic base.

Harkin is the avenging angel of Kevin Phillips, the Republican political mastermind who foresaw the era of GOP presidential dominance at its start and has lately been prophesying a reaction of equal force based on economic populism. "Kevin Phillips had a great influence on me," said Harkin. "He spells out in stark detail

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

exactly what's going on." When Harkin ran for reelection to the Senate in 1990, "I made it [Phillips's book *The Politics of Rich and Poor*] mandatory reading for people on my campaign."

"Democrats my age and older," explained Harkin, who is 51, "don't want to feel that everything they stood for all their lives was wrong for all these years. Has my whole life been wasted? All the things I believe in? Everything I worked for in the party has been wrong? So I've come along with a message telling them we haven't been wrong, we've been right. And we've got to be proud of what we stood for, proud of the things we did as a Democratic Party, not as a way of looking back at the glories of the past, but as a way of saying this is our Rock of Gibraltar." In this sense, Harkin is what Thatcher was and Reagan was: a conviction politician.

What's been keeping the Democrats back, in Harkin's accounting, is the Republicans' artifice and Democrats' cowardice. Harkin may see a bleak economic vista ahead, but his partisan message is invigorating. "I'll just submit this for your consideration," he said. "We don't have anything to apologize for. What we've got to do is show why *they* ought to be apologizing for what they've done to this country, what they've done to this economy, what they've done to ruin our kids' futures, what they've done to ruin hope and confidence." This sharp division between "us" and "them" is not some rhetorical device he happens to have stumbled upon, like Phillips's book. He comes by his populism, with its simplicities, authentically.

TOM HARKIN BY VINT LAWRENCE FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Up to a crucial point, the Tom Harkin story is very similar to the Ronald Reagan story. Harkin, in fact, far more resembles Reagan than Reagan's blue-blooded successor. No Democrat, after all, has been as harsh about Bush's class background as was Reagan in the 1980 GOP primaries. Harkin is running as Reagan might have run had he stayed a Democrat. Like Reagan, Harkin is the personification of his own myth. His vision of utopia and Reagan's, which Harkin describes in as much detail and with as much fervor as Reagan, are roughly the same place. "You know," said Harkin, announcing his candidacy, "the older I get, and the more I learn, the more I realize that all I ever needed to know I learned growing up in the small town of Cumming, Iowa." Cumming is not far—geographically or culturally—from Dixon, Illinois.

In every small respect, though, Harkin's life has been tougher than Reagan's, on whom the gods (or the studio bosses) sprinkled stardust. Harkin, the poor, outcast boy, was the classic Dickens character. His mother was a Slovenian immigrant, his father a coal miner. (Reagan's father was a salesman, his mother a do-gooder housewife.) Harkin, a Catholic, was raised with six brothers and sisters in a two-room house heated by a furnace; it was his job to stoke it with corn cobs. (Reagan's story features the leaky roof.) When Harkin was 10, his mother died. He was sent to live with an older sister. His salvation was the Democratic Party, which in Iowa was a kind of church, a fellowship of believers. The state was then overwhelmingly Republican, the party a virtual mainline Protestant institution. As a teenager, Harkin threw himself wholeheartedly into a congressional campaign. He was able to attend a distant high school only because the Democratic postmaster lent him a car to drive.

At Iowa State, on a Navy ROTC scholarship, Harkin was the leader of the Young Democrats. Trained afterward as a Navy pilot, he ferried planes in Vietnam. The experience turned him against the war. He soon became a field organizer in a Democratic gubernatorial race and then an aide to the U.S. representative he had campaigned for years earlier. On a trip to Vietnam, Harkin photographed South Vietnamese "tiger cages," barbaric underground chambers holding enemy prisoners. He sold the pictures to *Life* magazine for $10,000 and went to law school at Catholic University on the funds. He and his wife, Ruth, also a lawyer, returned to Iowa to run for office. She was elected a county attorney, but he lost a congressional race. (Ruth Harkin today is a lawyer with Akin, Gump, a major Washington law firm, and her husband's chief adviser.) Two years later, in 1974, after Watergate, he ran again and won. Ten years after that, he was elected to the Senate. In Iowan terms, Harkin was the country boy to whom the virtues of industry and thrift had been vouchsafed and who made good on them as a self-made man.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

They're off

The 1992 presidential field is more open than you'd think. According to the Presidential Address List put out by the Federal Election Commission, 112 people have already filed statements of candidacy. The FEC says an individual must receive contributions of $5,000 or more before he or she is "deemed to seek nomination for election." Although only twelve people have actually made the cut, including Paul Tsongas, Lyndon LaRouche (who's still in jail), and Andre Marrou, the Libertarian Party candidate, there's still plenty of time for others to catch up. Here's a quick rundown of the not-so-front-runners.

Mrs. Frank Stewart from Piedmont, Alabama, who goes only by her married name and has not yet raised any money, is outraged by the early reluctance of others to enter the fray. A retired schoolteacher who believes that we should elect a woman president—and soon—she declares: "Any citizen in the United States should be interested in the position. We enjoy the blessings of this great country and we should be willing to serve." Mrs. Stewart's real goal, she says, is to become the first woman to be elected U.S. senator from Alabama. She is running for president to get attention from the media. Her inspiration is a Mrs. Belva Lockwood, who won all the electoral votes from Indiana in the 1888 election, nearly upending front-runner Grover Cleveland.

George Berish of Honolulu, chairman of the American Political Party, promises "a return to more fundamental ethical concepts which hold that there is a universal meaning to what things and which conduct are 'good.'" Berish is seeking a party logo to go along with his platform. For the moment, he has imaginatively settled on the American Owl with the slogan, "Whooo would you vote for?"

Not surprising, God plays a large part in many of the campaigns. The most fervently Christian of all candidates is Jack Fellure of Hurricane, West Virginia, who's put in $40,000 of his own money so far and who, upon declaring candidacy, sent to the FEC a leatherbound copy of his platform, the Authorized 1611 King James Bible. "God wrote it as the supreme document and final authority in the affairs of all men, nations, and civilizations, for time and eternity," he says. "It shall never be necessary to change it." Fellure says he will keep the Bible open on his desk in the Oval Office at all times. He is so sure of his eventual victory that he stamps all his campaign materials with the words: "Historical Documents. Do Not Destroy. Retain For Future Use."

Calvin Harris of Chandler, Arizona, told me he is seeking the presidency because a special IQ test named him the smartest man in the world. However, he said, he could not send me any campaign documents because FBI agents had recently broken his hands, preventing him from revealing the "truth about Watergate." David Hornberger of Covina, California, who also ran in 1980, falls into the same genre. He says he will have trouble getting elected this time because people keep trying to assassinate him. "After the end of the year, I have to start hiding," Hornberger told me. "I've learned to time my personal life and my first campaign mailing. The Republicans and Democrats are not going to relinquish power without shooting someone."

Roaring out of Billings, Montana, comes the teetotaling fireball Curly Thornton, who, as his campaign material says, took his first drink at age 17. "During the next eighteen years," a Curly press release says, "his life became a living hell. Barroom brawls, gunshot wounds, spouse abuse, divorces, bankruptcies, detox center and several treatment centers labeled him a lost cause." But Curly has gone straight now and, as the No. 1 spokesman against alcohol and drug abuse in the state of Montana is officially seeking the Democratic nomination. He says he has raised $150,000 so far. Also crusading is Nick Kratsas, a part-time security guard at Youngstown State University in Ohio, who says his candidacy represents the "notch babies," the 12 million Americans born between 1917 and 1921 who complain that they are being deprived of the full Social Security payments that are rightly theirs because of a glitch in the law. Kratsas is very concerned about smokers' rights and clandestine mind manipulation by the media. He sent me his full platform as well as a photograph of him enjoying a 1987 vacation at a hotel in Argentina.

There are, of course, other one-issue candidates. Elijah Anderson Omega from Palmdale, California, includes in his agenda a national law that would make it illegal for any woman under the age of 18 to have sex. Charles Gordon Vick of Memphis, Tennessee, says he is opposed to any person being president who is influenced by the "Bilderbergers, Trilateralist Commission, or any other Communist support group, such as the NAACP, ACLU, or ADL of B'nai Brith." Vick says the media have not covered his campaign because "they are biased against Christian Jews," and he has asked Representative Stephen Solarz of New York to be his running mate because, he says, "he's an Orthodox Jew and I'm a Christian Jew and that should be a good combination, because 90 percent of the country's Jewish anyhow."

A few potential presidents are consulting more than just their astrologer. Kip Lee from Redding, California, told me that for the past forty years the U.S. government has been holding captive four powerful outer space beings in Dayton, Ohio. His first move as president would be to "incarcerate the military perpetrators and release the captives because the perpetrators are, in reality, members of the world's secret governments." These secret governments, Lee says, will be vanquished with the second coming of Jesus Christ, an event he will help facilitate as president.

But at the heart of Lee's agenda lies the Ashtar Space Command, "a loving group of space people who want the citizens of the Planet Earth to grow spiritually by receiving God-realization." Lee says he knows about Ashtar because they last visited Earth when the continent of Atlantis was thriving, and at that time, he was president of Atlantis in another life. He says Ashtar will save the Earth from nuclear destruction and that they will then teach us to love one another. He has communicated these ideas in several letters to President Bush. "It is now time for humanity to cease from its childish war games," Lee wrote to Bush, "and become MAN, with an awakened sense of his responsibility and accountability for life on Earth. This planet will yet become a member of its own peaceful solar system and galaxy, and will become a part of the Universal Alliance of Peace." Jerry Brown, the race is on.

NEAL POLLACK

Neal Pollack is a former TNR reporter-researcher.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

His fierce partisanship is but an aspect of his traditionalism. Harkin sees himself as the real defender of traditional values—and "Dutch" Reagan, erstwhile Des Moines sports broadcaster, liberal Democrat turned conservative Republican, as the pretender. But out of context, the two sound virtually identical: "I call traditional values things like hard work; individual responsibility, take care of yourself; being frugal, because let's face it, the way most of us started, we didn't have a hell of a lot, so we had to husband our resources ... taking care of our family; faith in God; love of country. Why have we been ashamed to talk about these values?" That's Harkin, by the way, not Reagan.

In the Senate, Harkin has not been near the center of power; nor is he much trusted by those who are. He is seen as abrasive and as too caught up in his own crusades. Harkin is often not with the program—the political program, that is. It was his motion that forced a vote on the Gulf war resolution before the leadership was prepared to do so. He is proud of this obstreperous record. On the Gulf, he favored the sanctions approach and opposed granting the president war powers. His foreign policy in general is a function of his moralism: his anger at Bush over Tiananmen Square is unfeigned. On his office wall there hangs a large poster of the celebrated Chinese protester halting a column of tanks. Bush, said Harkin, "is on the side of the tanks."

Harkin's major senatorial accomplishment is the Americans with Disabilities Act. He has been a tribune for the handicapped, many of whom regard him with messianic faith. (Harkin's motive is partly personal. His brother became deaf at age 9.) In Iowa his initial election in the year of the Reagan landslide had been seen as a fluke. He did not have many devoted allies in the Democratic Party. Some influential Democrats were put off by his occasionally brusque manner. He didn't seem to care if he was liked. But the supposedly vulnerable Harkin won re-election handily, and suddenly his roughness was almost universally admired as toughness. He himself took great pride in his political prowess. This feeling soon carried him to the idea of a presidential candidacy.

Though Harkin's populism has already found striking resonance within the party, the historically shifting movement of which it is only the latest incarnation has always been limited. The original populists were agrarian radicals who sought to use the state to restore a Jeffersonian farmers' republic, an ideal that was fatally nostalgic. Bryan, after all, was a three-time loser. In 1924, during the Republican ascendancy of the Roaring '20s, Robert LaFollette of Wisconsin, by then a weary warhorse, ran as a third party candidate for the Progressive Party. It was very much a Midwestern cause, originating in the populist heartland, Bryan's stomping grounds. LaFollette's campaign, representing the discontented farmers and industrial workers, was both an appeal to memory and a harbinger of the coming of the New Deal, which was far broader than a populist revolt.

Throughout the upper Midwest after the New Deal, the old radicalism was reframed within new Democratic parties. Hubert Humphrey was the founding father in Minnesota, just as a decade later George McGovern was in South Dakota. Walter Mondale was the staff man as heir apparent. Gary Hart was the younger heretic. All of them, one way or another, were the offspring of the heartland's social gospel. Outside that sphere lay the brooding, sardonic Catholic intellectual, Eugene McCarthy, more Irish Democrat than Farmer-Laborite.

Harkin is the loner who speaks in the moral tone of this evangelical past. His belief in the balanced budget amendment is a revealing atavism going back to the pre-Humphrey agrarian notion of the household economy. Most important, the Democratic Party today is not what it was in the 1950s, when the New Deal coalition was still intact. Harkin offers a version of populism suited to the realities of an industrial economy that has been superseded. He seeks to rally the farmers and labor but does not acknowledge the new classes who are the victims of this particular recession—the first postindustrial recession that has struck white-collar workers hardest.

The fervor of populism has also long been part of its undoing. Its intense emotionalism attracts many adherents but prevents the movement from expanding. Like the Great Awakenings, exhaustion is as intrinsic to it as its initial passion. Harkin is at the beginning of this cycle. He can only hope that the cycle in the country at large does not expend itself before November 1992. If he does not perform better in Iowa than any other candidate has ever done, his candidacy will be over in an instant. But if he survives, he moves on to New Hampshire, where the boom of the 1980s is ended and the pall of recession has been lowered. The mood in the Granite State this time is more like that in Iowa than it was in 1984 or 1988. If he wins in New Hampshire, he moves on to Super Tuesday in the South, a region historically primed for populist appeals. If his rhetoric takes, Harkin's only real worry will be that another candidate will adapt it and mix it in a less combustible concoction.

By fortuitous coincidence, Harkin's candidacy has intersected with the Bush downturn. The idiom of the old-time religion allows him to give political expression to the spreading anxiety. He has set a theme that may doom him, but to which the other contenders will undoubtedly respond. Now, being the outsider who says what he wants serves his purposes completely. "I decided when I started this, if I crash and burn, hey, I stay in the Senate then," he told me. "No big deal. I've got another life. I don't *have* to be president. I want to be president. I want to lead the country. But I don't want it so bad that I'm going to sell who I am and try to contort myself all out of shape, to figure out how I send different messages to different people so I can get there. Ah, the hell with it. So that's why I kind of feel kind of liberated." His fidelity to the creed, he hopes, will bring the resurrection of the Democratic Party. •

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Different Places, Different Troubles

The day before I saw **The Indian Runner** (MGM/UA) I read a unique and chilling article in the latest issue of *Granta*. "Family Album" is by Mikal Gilmore, one of the younger brothers of Gary Gilmore, the murderer about whom Norman Mailer wrote *The Executioner's Song*. The article's first line: "I am the brother of a man who murdered innocent men." It goes on to disclose what it was like to see that murderer, first through the eyes of juvenile adoration, then through different eyes as time shook this turbulent family and as Gary made his way to capital punishment.

The article primed me for *The Indian Runner*, which was written and directed by the actor Sean Penn, his first such work. (He doesn't appear in it.) Penn says it was suggested by Bruce Springsteen's song "Highway Patrolman," which I don't know, but it could also have been suggested by Mikal Gilmore's article if it had been published a few years ago. The atmosphere is much the same. The landscapes, though not identical, seem comparable: for the Gilmores, it was Utah and Oregon, for Penn's film, Nebraska. The social stratum *is* almost identical: not quite middle class yet with qualities that keep it from being pure prole. These people are accustomed to violence, arrests, and jail terms in the family yet are concerned with conventional respectability.

Penn's film has burdens to bear. The symbolic title comes from an Indian legend about the way Indians hunted deer by running them down; the relevance to the picture is thin, yet the use of the symbol gets heavy. The basic story situation is familiar, the Good Brother vs. Bad Brother pattern. (There are rhetorical flourishes in Penn's dialogue, but Gilmore's article prepared me for them.) Still, the film survives its symbolism, and Penn finds a credible means to avoid the stock brotherly love-and-opposition ending that seems foretold.

1968. A wide, lonely countryside along a road. Two cars burst into the shot, the first one being chased by the second, a police car. They both screech to a halt. The fugitive gets out and fires a pistol at the cop; the cop gets out and plunks a rifle bullet into the fugitive's chest. We know that this moment, starkly photographed by Anthony B. Richmond, is going to be a reference point.

The cop, Joe, a gentle man with a wife and child, is sorely troubled by what he had to do. Soon more troubles arrive. His brother Frank returns from Vietnam with his torso (we soon learn) covered with tattoos, including a swastika. Frank was a restless, menacing man before Nam and is now worse. The two brothers genuinely care for each other, insofar as Frank can express it, but he soon leaves town, gets into police trouble in Ohio, then with Joe's help eventually comes back to town with a girlfriend.

Throughout all these troubles and others, Joe is unfailingly patient, Frank tacitly grateful, though he is not quite able to do the straightening-out that Joe urges. Frank even gets a job, instead of stealing, and is glad when his girlfriend gets pregnant. Things look to be working out, but Frank erupts again, in sheer violence, and Joe has to pursue him. (On the night that Frank's baby is born, of which some unsubtle intercutting reminds us.) This leads to an ending that neither fulfills the Indian legend nor the movie platitude; it fits the film's hushed air of being prepared for the worst.

This mood is Penn's best creation: the feeling that life is being lived quietly but guardedly on the last frontier of Western violence; that though Frank is much worse than anyone around him, he is nonetheless the overt presentation of what lies buried in many of them. This flannel-shirted, close-to-the-bone life is hardly new to films, but Penn's achievement is, first, to plunge deeply for its essence in these men, then work outward. He doesn't rely on the decor to make his atmosphere—the cheap household furnishings, the barroom prowling, the grungy hotels. He begins with the people, then puts them in the places where they belong.

His use of faces in the crowd, of chunks of silent action, of slow motion, are all deft and telling. His use of actors is no less so. As Joe, David Morse is quietly pleasant, if a bit doughy. As the worn-out father of the two brothers, Charles Bronson—once the biggest international film star—plays with the

FILMS WORTH SEEING

City of Hope. *John Sayles wrote, directed, edited it. The writing is the least. His directing and editing etch an acid picture of interconnected moral sleaze in an American city. (Reviewed 10/14/91)* **Dead Again.** *A time-travel murder mystery, done with high-Hollywood flourish. Kenneth Branagh (he directed) and Emma Thompson play double roles takingly. (9/16&23/91)* **The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe.** *Worth its long title. Jane Wagner wrote and Lily Tomlin plays this one-person gallery of characters. Distinctions among them get a bit blurry, but much of it is uncomfortably funny. (10/7/91)* **Sex, Drugs, Rock & Roll.** *Another one-person show, this one written by the performer, Eric Bogosian. He is more trenchant than Tomlin-Wagner, but less funny. He, too, casts a sharp eye on the world, but he, too, gets a bit blurry. (10/7/91)* —**SK**

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ease of a retired champ. Patricia Arquette (sister of Rosanna), as Frank's girlfriend, who screams when she is excited about *anything*, is suitably pathetic. Dennis Hopper, as a sagely seasoned bartender, fits comfortably into the milieu.

But the picture is held together—as Penn surely knew—by Viggo Mortensen's performance as Frank. I've never seen Mortensen before, but I certainly hope to see him again. He looks like a young Antonin Artaud gone vicious. For this film, he embodies perfectly the truth of "badness" as egomania: the person who sees the hypocrisy of society and the humiliations of docility and, instead of using these perceptions as an inverse power source for getting through the day, takes them as a license to hurt and steal and kill. He feels he has a right to commit those acts because he has those perceptions. (And inevitably he compares his own violence to the killing that Joe did at the start, not in legality but in deep feral pleasure.) It's a part that Penn might have played himself, but, wisely, he directed Mortensen instead. This is only one reason to look forward to more of Penn's filmmaking.

Every lit crit student will recognize the title of **The Fisher King** (TriStar) as the name of one of the key figures in Jessie L. Weston's study of the Holy Grail legend, *From Ritual to Romance*. An odd title for a film, even though a sort of Grail quest occurs in this Manhattan-based story.

In Richard LaGravenese's laboriously fanciful screenplay, a New York disc jockey (Jeff Bridges) with a big audience brusquely rebuffs one of his phone-in fans, who thereupon goes to a bar and kills people. Deejay topples from fame and fortune. A couple of years later, on a garbage dump, he meets a former professor of history (Robin Williams) whose life and rationality were shattered by one of those killings. The two men team up and, with the aid of their girlfriends, regain themselves. The climactic sequence is a raid on a rich man's Park Avenue fortress that contains a chalice that Williams thinks to be the Grail. This is actually more credible than the last shot, in which the two men lie in the middle of a Central Park meadow—at night! undisturbed!—and reflect philosophically.

The direction of the film is exaggeratedly coy, arch, limpingly lyrical, sweatingly unusual. In other words, it's by Terry Gilliam, once a member of the Monty Python group (and co-director of *Monty Python and the Holy Grail*), whose work has become increasingly cute. His last film, for instance, was the achingly

AIDS, CRACK, HOMELESSNESS,

AMERICA AT CENTURY'S END

Edited by ALAN WOLFE

latchkey children, and surrogate mothers are all indicators that the pace of change has outstripped the ability of American institutions to adapt. *America at Century's End* shows us ourselves anew and in the full flux of the immense changes in American life.

"A massive, lively, often surprising portrait of America in the throes of change."
—*Publishers Weekly*

"Clear, winning, and original. . . . Topical, contemporary, anecdotal, and of general appeal."—*Kirkus Reviews*

594 pages, $29.95 hardcover

Also available by Alan Wolfe—
WHOSE KEEPER?
Social Science and Moral Obligation
388 pages, $12.95 paperback, $29.95 hardcover

Available at bookstores or order toll-free 1-800-822-6657. Visa & MasterCard only.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS
Berkeley Los Angeles New York Oxford

"This country needs a democratic left. The collapse of communism and the demise of the cold war should be occasions for renewal. . . .

"There is a democratic dream to be renewed. It is the practical dream of libertarians like Thomas Paine and feminists like Elizabeth Cady Stanton, of socialists and trade unionists like Eugene V. Debs and A. Philip Randolph, of civil rights champions like Rosa Parks and Martin Luther King, Jr. . . ."

DEMOCRATIC VISTAS 1991:
A STATEMENT FOR THE DEMOCRATIC LEFT

For a copy of the complete Democratic Vistas *statement, which has been signed by over 100 intellectuals and activists from the U.S. democratic left, send $1 to* ***Dissent*** *magazine, 521 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10017. (Or send $6 for the Fall 1991 issue of* ***Dissent****, in which the statement appears.)*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

elaborate *The Adventures of Baron Munchausen.*

Gilliam is precisely the worst director in the world for Williams, who needs guidance, not abetment, and who, electrically gifted though he is, here merely carries on. Bridges has a different kind of self-indulgence. He thinks that merely by hulking around, he is a presence. He isn't. Mercedes Ruehl, a reliable actress, does all that can be done with the trite role of Bridges's vulgar but good-hearted girlfriend. As Williams's adored mundane princess, Amanda Plummer has the Ugly Duckling role but never becomes a swan. •

Robert Brustein on Theater

Yuppie Realism, Continued

Lips Together, Teeth Apart is the most accomplished expression thus far of Yuppie Realism, an aesthetic now dominating non-musical American theater, with the encouragement and endorsement of influential New York critics. Literate and sophisticated, Yuppie Realism almost invariably focuses on upwardly mobile middle-class professionals, usually on vacation, in the act of exchanging witticisms while examining faulty relationships and compromised principles. Although Yuppie Realism will touch on serious subjects—primarily AIDS, homosexuality, and the mistreatment of women—it mirrors an essentially narcissistic society. Rarely do plays of this type acknowledge that deficiencies of personal behavior have anything to do with any wider failures than political incorrectitude. Yuppie Realism, in short, is simply romantic comedy with a message, in which the audience is allowed to pay for its entertainment with a dollop of liberal guilt.

Although also divided in tone, Terrence McNally's highly acclaimed play has considerably more consistency of purpose than Richard Greenberg's *Eastern Standard,* and although equally prone to cleverness, it succeeds in combining wisdom and wisecracks better than Wendy Wasserstein's *The Heidi Chronicles.* McNally belongs to an older generation of playwrights than most other Yuppie Realists, and therefore he salts his work with more experience. His insider's knowledge of theater (including opera) informs the jaundiced satirical perspective from which he regards his material. Once a disciple of Tennessee Williams, making radical raids on American sexual mores from the outer margins of society, McNally now seems, like other playwrights in this movement, to be writing in the vein of Philip Barry: wry, ironic, and lyrical comedies seasoned by middle-class rationality and urban angst.

The first time I tried to see *Lips Together, Teeth Apart* at the Manhattan Theatre Club, the theater was under water. A main had broken, the stage was drenched, and the electrical system had been shorted. When I returned several months later to see the piece with everything in working order (though there were two replacements in the cast), I was better able to appreciate the ironic appropriateness of the cancellation. Catastrophes associated with water constitute the central metaphor of the play. John Lee Beatty's realistic setting, a wooden deck located in front of three glass doors of a Fire Island vacation house, features a distant view of beach and ocean, as well as a downstage swimming pool. The pool was previously used by a character now dead from AIDS, and the play climaxes in the death of an anonymous homosexual, seen on the beach, who commits suicide by drowning.

In a sense, you could say that all the characters are drowning, though the mortal condition of the two couples who constitute the dramatis personae is revealed only gradually through a haze of pranks and banter. When the action begins, we hear a quartet from *Così fan tutte* resounding from the stereo next door, and the plot suggests the kind of sexual swapping that characterizes that opera. The parallel is not complete—one of the characters, Sam Truman, is the brother of John Haddock's wife, Chloe. Still, Haddock has had an affair with Sam's wife, Sally, about which Sam is vaguely aware.

This suggests a "relationship" play, and that's what this play is, although McNally occasionally has a bigger fish to fry (or drown). *Lips Together, Teeth Apart* is intended as a poem of desperation, with all the characters on edge about something in their lives. Both couples are ill-matched. John characterizes his relationship with Chloe as "New England's longest-running fecund shotgun marriage," and Sally, inquiring about the meaning of "fecund," confesses that, after numerous failures at parturition ("I can reproduce, I'm just unable to deliver them"), she is pregnant again, even though her husband is frightened of having children. Chloe, a talkative guest of the Trumans, demonstrates the tyranny of unnecessary cares by bustling around the deck with a variety of canapés and courses that nobody wants to eat. And her husband, John, for his part, is afflicted with cancer of the esophagus, a fatal fact revealed early to the audience and to the other characters at the end of the play. (He didn't want to ruin their weekend.)

John's initial confession of illness is actually spoken to Sam, who doesn't hear it. Sam stands frozen on stage with his hand in the air, a technique for revealing secret thoughts employed on occasion by the other three characters as well. It is a convention first employed by Eugene O'Neill in *Strange Interlude* (and properly satirized by Groucho Marx in *Animal Crackers*). It was awkward then and it is awkward now. But since McNally's ear for civilized discourse is considerably more precise than O'Neill's, it is a minor flaw in an otherwise expressive play. On the other hand, the unheard soliloquy—once a poetic method of taking the audience into your confidence—has since become a convention of soap opera. And like O'Neill's play, *Lips Together, Teeth Apart* at times skirts perilously close to sudsy dishwater—a kind of *Strange Interlude* for suburbanites, an infidelity play for the leisure classes.

Even though the characters sometimes seem to have little more at stake than not being able to make Black Russians without Kahlúa (there is also much ado about the pain of removing a splinter), McNally provides a serious undercurrent that ripples beneath the waters of the beach house pool and eventually emerges through the surface chatter and arguments. John is vaguely racist ("11 percent of this country is black—it's amazing, I would have thought it was more like 50 percent"). He is, like Sam, also more than a little homophobic. Both the Trumans and the Haddocks are heterosexuals vacationing in a homosexual enclave of Fire Island. (Sally inherited her gay brother's house after his death.) This becomes the occasion for numerous suggestive jokes ("Suppose I wanted to whip my dick out?" "This is Fire Island, Sam, I would strenuously advise against it") and acerbic observations (a male in a bikini looks like he's "flossing his ass").

But it also forms the basis for the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

covert theme of the play. Everyone suspects the pool is infected with AIDS, since Sally's brother swam in it with his black lover. At the climax, with their feet dangling in the pool, Sally drinks the water and kisses Sam, saying, "Let's all get AIDS and die." This leads to her final confession, that she helped her brother commit suicide. She had been repelled by his homosexuality, by his touch and his smell; she wonders what she would think about having a homosexual child. But her divided attitude is dominated by feelings of love ("I'm glad I never saw my brother dancing with another man—now I never will").

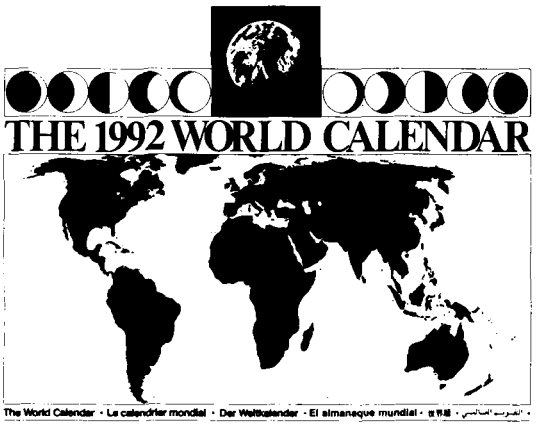
Sally is a touching and complicated character when she is not being asked to function as a comic butt. The burden she bears is to misremember the titles of movies and the names of movie stars. July Fourth fireworks remind her of *Catch Any Thief* with Cary Grant and Ava Gardner. At one point, she manages to persuade all the skeptics that Irving Berlin's song is called "There's No Business Like the Show Business." But for all the gags about her klutzy memory, she is possessed of a genuinely morbid streak that makes her seem often on the brink of breakdown. An abstract painter, she is almost always abstracted. The anonymous swimmer who sheds his bathing suit and enters the sea ("Whoever you are, my small, beautiful, silent swimmer, come back safely") is a surrogate for her dead brother. She feels responsible for the swimmer's death too, because she mentally urged him on. ("He wanted to die and I helped him.")

At the end, after all the obligatory confessions, the two couples watch a shooting star, just as previously they joined in a chorus of "America." Their unity is artificial, their reconciliations seem temporary. McNally has created a world in which everyone is merry and nobody is happy, even in the midst of recreational plenty. *Lips Together, Teeth Apart* tantalizes with possibility. There is matter here that could be extended into a public dimension, but for most of its length the play seems as self-regarding, as self-enclosed, as unanchored as the society it depicts.

John Tillinger's production is smooth, occasionally facile. The pacing has the rhythms of farce even in moments of pathos. We are never allowed to forget (to cite another McNally work) that "it's only a play." This contrasts with the literalism with which Tillinger treats externals. Characters shampoo their hair under real running shower water; we detect the odor of real hamburgers cooking on the charcoal broiler; I could almost smell the pimentos on Chloe's freshly prepared canapés. Under Tillinger's direction, however, the acting is effortless and well controlled. Anthony Heald brings both delicacy and pain to the part of John Haddock, and cruelty too, when he humiliates Sam in front of his wife. Nathan Lane, as the befuddled and wounded Sam, sounds like Groucho Marx imitating the Shubert executive Gerald Schoenfeld. Roxanne Hart, subbing in a part originally played by Swoozie Kurtz, almost succeeds in closing the division between airhead and tragedienne that makes Sally seem so inconsistent, while Deborah Rush, subbing for Christine Baranski, is irresistible as the officious, garrulous Chloe ("I hope nobody minds if I shut up for a while"), a walking compendium of brand names and show-biz references.

McNally's rather awkward title refers to the method Sally learned to cure herself of grinding her teeth. But it unwittingly defines a split in his play as well, between the relationship plot and the desultory social theme. Perhaps next time this gifted playwright will abandon Yuppie Realism and let us bite on something with our teeth closed, too. •

SPECIAL OFFER: **LE CALENDRIER MONDIAL • DER WELTKALENDER • EL ALMANAQUE MUNDIAL • 世界 • التقويم العالمي**


THE 1992 WORLD CALENDAR
The World Calendar · Le calendrier mondial · Der Weltkalender · El almanaque mundial · 世界 · التقويم العالمي

Includes:

- **Holidays of the world's five major religions – Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hindu, Buddhist – in six languages.**
- **National and bank holidays of a hundred nations.**
- **Each weekday and month in six languages.**
- **Each photo caption in six languages.**
- **An International Time Zone Map.**
- **English radio broadcast frequencies throughout the world.**
- **And an index to help you find and understand celebration days throughout the globe.**

This unique calendar is illustrated with cultural and meaningful photos which reflect the world's diversity of cultural tradition. Each month brings a new theme based on an important cultural or religious motif. The World Calendar is truly the first international calendar. Printed in six languages – English, French, German, Spanish, Japanese, and Arabic – this large (11"x14") calendar will be an attractive addition to any room – whether at home or the office. And it will enrich each day with the wealth of international experience. Perfect for those with international business or interests.

"Our subscribers have found The World Calendar to be an excellent resource for international business and travel."
Bill Bonner, Publisher, International Living

World Calender-EU • c/o Educational Extension Systems • P.O. Box 259 • Clarks Summit, PA 18411 • Toll Free 1-800-447-8561

☐ Please send me (1) calendar at $10.95 plus $3.00 postage ($13.95)
For (2) or more calendars, please send _____ calendars at $10.95 plus $2.00 postage ($12.95)
☐ Check or Purchase Order enclosed. **Phone Orders 1-800-447-8561**
☐ Charge my credit card ☐ VISA ☐ MasterCard
Card No. _____ Exp. Date _____

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

What is the Festival of Indonesia? And what is Indonesia?

The Year of Living Culturally

BY CLIFFORD GEERTZ

I.

It sounds like a Barnum poster. Three hundred dancers and musicians! Fifty performances! Four major art exhibits! A hundred smaller ones! Puppet plays! Film series! Lectures ("The House That Wears Jewelry Like A Man," "Footsteps In The Sea"), fashions, foods, textiles, photographs, flower arrangements, herbal medicines, maps, masks, videos, body music, navigation, folk life, mythology! Two-hundred and fifty events over eighteen months in fifty American cities: Washington and Houston, New York and Honolulu, De Kalb and Grand Rapids, St. Cloud and Upper Montclair!

The Festival of Indonesia, launched last September with a grand gala at the Kennedy Center and spread by now over virtually every region of the country save Alaska, is rather a phenomenon. The question is, what sort of phenomenon is it? An effort to create an image of the mind of one people in the mind of another? An exercise in what its general director, the ex-Foreign Minister Mochtar Kusumaatmadja, forthrightly calls "cultural diplomacy"? An attempt by the inheritors of a civilization who see it as undervalued, not only with respect to that of Europe but, what is worse, those of India, China, Japan, and the Middle East, perhaps even Africa, to push it into the world-historical mainstream? A search for a generally recognized national identity? A leap into the contemporary world of negotiable art? A flourish of sensibilities? A political smoke screen? An enormous tourist brochure?

From one point of view, the festival is but the latest example of a phenomenon that has become increasingly popular over the past twenty years or so: the massive, and to all intents and purposes governmental, staging of the culture of an Asian, African, or Latin American country in the galleries and the auditoriums of the West. Americans and Europeans have been looking at the artwork of distant peoples brought to them by various sorts of wonder collectors for delight or instruction at least since the public museum was established toward the middle of the last century; and a little later the rise of international exhibitions made representative natives and live performances (the Javanese orchestra that Debussy heard, the Balinese demon dance that Artaud saw) available as well.

The Sculpture of Indonesia
by Jan Fontein et al.
(National Gallery of Art and Harry N. Abrams, 312 pp., $29.95)

Court Arts of Indonesia
by Helen Ibbitson Jessup
(The Asia Society Galleries and Harry N. Abrams, 288 pp., $55, $45 paper)

Beyond the Java Sea: Art of Indonesia's Outer Islands
by Paul Michael Taylor and Lorraine V. Aragon
(The National Museum of Natural History and Harry N. Abrams, 319 pp., $65, $29.95 paper)

Modern Indonesian Art: Three Generations of Tradition and Change, 1945-1990
by Joseph Fischer et al.
(Panitia Pameran KIAS, Jakarta, and Festival of Indonesia, New York, 222 pp., $29.95)

What is new in the present situation, the result of the rearrangements of power that have followed the collapse of colonialism after the Second World War, is that the objects and the performances—and the natives as well—are not being brought, they are being sent. China, India, Japan, various countries of the Middle East and Africa, and most recently Brazil and Mexico have all mounted vast and official presentations abroad of what they usually call their national heritage. "New York will be more exotic this Fall," proclaimed the ads for the Mexican blockbuster, "Mexico, A Work of Art," at New York's Met last year. (There were lesser displays at MOMA, Lincoln Center, the IBM Gallery, Carnegie Hall, "and 40 other New York cultural institutions," the whole inaugurated by President Salinas as the opening shot of his trade agreement offensive here.) *Le Temps du Maroc*, a year-long fantasia involving hundreds of musicians, actors, painters, writers, and craftsmen, to be held all over France in celebration of Hassan II's thirty years on the Moroccan throne and negotiated at the highest levels ("just the sort of razzle-dazzle the French culture minister, Jack Lang, excels at," *The Economist* remarked), was called off at the last minute when a book attacking the king as a murderer and torturer inconveniently appeared in Paris. ("*Quand viendra-t-il*," the last line read, "*le temps du Maroc?*")

It was just a matter of time until Indonesia, whose external image is a newsprint blur of massacres, economic resurgence, military annexations, smiling autocracy, and, inevitably, Bali—"where Presidents and Royalty spend their Holidays," as a festival-connected tour package has it—moved to project itself in terms of its art.

The festival is, in any case, no mere happening. It was brought into being with the signing by Kusumaatmadja and Secretary of State George Shultz of a government-to-government agreement in 1987. (President Suharto, the determined army general who displaced Sukarno after a failed coup twenty-six years ago and installed the present military-dominated "New Order" regime, issued a concurrent decree in Jakarta.) It operates under the aegis of the Indonesian Foreign Ministry, and the American coordinator is the same ex-State Department official turned private publicist who managed the even larger (800 programs, 140 cities, 44 states) India festival here five years ago. It is funded by twenty or so American corporations and foundations (Mobil, Boeing, International Nickel, Texaco, UNOCAL; Mellon, Luce, Ford, NEA, the Smithsonian), with some assistance from Indonesian state enterprises—the oil monopoly, the airline, the central bank. More than $6 million had been raised from the American side alone by spring a year ago.

There is a blue-ribbon American committee, headed by S. Dillon Ripley, the ex-secretary of the Smithsonian, which includes Shultz and Paul Wolfowitz, the undersecretary of defense who was our ambassador in Jakarta. There is an Indonesian one headed by the minister of education, which includes the directors generals for information, TV, and tourism. (1991 has been officially designated "Visit Indonesia Year.") Among the major American cultural institutions involved are the Kennedy Center, the National Gallery, the Sackler, and the Natural History Museum in Washington; the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Brooklyn Academy of Music, and Asia House in New York; Houston's Museum of Natural History, San Diego's Museum

CLIFFORD GEERTZ is the author most recently of *Works and Lives: The Anthropologist as Author* (Stanford University Press).

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of Man, San Francisco's de Young, Seattle's Wing Luke, Boston's Faneuil Hall, and the Cincinnati zoo. Aside from "cultural diplomacy," Kusumaatmadja has coined another term for it all: "Indonesia's Coming Out Party."

II.

"Coming in" is more like it. The confrontation of American sensibilities by such unusual objects as shadow plays and bark cloths, sow goddesses and monkey dances, the overwhelming bulk of them never before seen here, produces immediately an aesthetic worry. Are the messages being sent the messages being received? This is a reasonable enough concern. A mismatch is surely inevitable between what such objects mean to those who make and surround themselves with them and what they are taken to mean by those who, somewhere else and of an afternoon, can hardly do more than passively attend to them.

But the terms in which that concern is expressed these days—terms centering around so-called cultural barriers to understanding—do more to conceal what is going on than they do to reveal it. The idea that the aim of the festival is to get Americans to respond to Indonesian art forms as Indonesians respond to them begs most of the questions that the enterprise poses. Is such a thing possible? Is it what either of the parties to the engagement are after? Is seeking out "cultural barriers" and tearing them down really how the spirit of one people comes into practical contact with the spirit of another?

Consider, in this regard, an article that appeared in the Arts and Leisure section of *The New York Times* last September on the sixty-four dancers from the central Javanese court city of Yogyakarta (a place of some half million people in the heart of the island's rice basket) traveling about the country under the festival auspices. Headlined "CAN JAVA'S COURT DANCERS CAST THEIR SPELL ABROAD?" and subheadlined "In its Tour of the U.S. the Festival of Indonesia is Hoping to Overcome Cultural Barriers," the story went on:

> The rewards of a global view of art can be immense. But it would be naive to think there are no barriers to understanding between cultures. Festival organizers are confident that Americans will respond to the color and beauty of their culture, but they want more than that. They want Western audiences to see the depth beneath the surface exoticism. At the same time, they worry about finding ways to fit Indonesian art forms into a foreign theatrical context without diluting or distorting them.

The image is clear enough. The "barriers" lie wholly on the "consuming" side, in the foreign conditions under which the dancers must perform and in the foreign audiences they must address. The "producing" side, by contrast, merely offers what it has as honestly as it can.

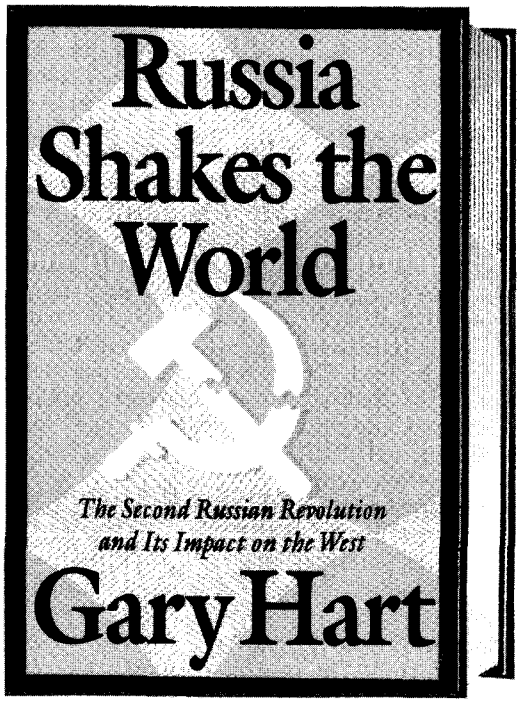
The "overcoming" of those barriers, moreover, is a matter of seeing through gorgeous surfaces to hidden depths, of "transplanting ... fragile, indigenous art form[s]" from a city whose cultural status "is not unlike that of Kyoto in Japan" to American showplaces where tomorrow there may be jazz or Shakespeare. The writer evokes the "velvet thunder of gongs and drums," the crouching walks "reserved for court entrances and exits," and the "layers of symbolism ... personifying the commingling of male and female principles, the union of divinity and king, the triumph of mind over body" of the ballets and shadow plays, and asks, not unreasonably: "How can such complexities—and subtleties—be translated from one culture to another?"

The responses to this problem are familiar enough. There is the provision of copious program notes that will do what the arts by themselves cannot do, that is, provide a technical and historical context for their interpretation. (The catalogs for the main exhibitions, largely

A frontline look at the new Kremlin

"Former senator Hart, having discussed Perestroika with Gorbachev and most of Russia's top political, academic, and military leadership, delivers a provocative report on the sudden about-face and uncertain future of the USSR."—*Kirkus Reviews*

"The powerful work of a penetrating mind."
—Peter F. Krogh, Dean, Georgetown University



HarperCollins*Publishers*
Also available from HarperCollins*Canada Ltd.*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the work of American, and in one case Dutch, scholars, are unusually detailed.) There is the simulation of the settings in which they are, on their home grounds, performed. (In Los Angeles the dances were held in an outdoor arboretum, considered reminiscent of a Javanese palace. In Boston a shadow play was staged in a street market.) And there is the adaptation of the performances to "Western theatrical milieus." ("We have mastered the Western proscenium," a Javanese choreographer is quoted as saying. As "most festival events will last about two hours," works that run longer have been subject to "judicious cuts, primarily by eliminating repetitions or by advancing the plot through narration rather than action.")

Though eliminating repetitions in a shadow play comes perilously close to eliminating the shadow play, which works by repetition, and advancing the plot of a court ballet through narration assumes that it is telling a story rather than displaying a realm, all this is surely inescapable, the mere condition of things if outright bafflement is to be avoided. And anyway the same sort of streamlining goes on these days, even more flagrantly, in Indonesia itself. But whether it leads to "young and old, black and white, Indonesian and American," to quote another newspaper piece on the Yogya dancers, this one from *The Boston Globe*, "reach[ing] across the cultural divide and discover[ing] harmony in the international language of art" is another question.

For in fact the shows and the showings of the festival do *not* obliterate difference. Nor are they really meant to. They are meant to mark it, to define it, to set it out, in some sense to entrench and to celebrate it. Like an Academy Awards show or a St. Patrick's Day parade, the festival is a sort of art form in itself, a constructed thing that somebody (or somebodies) has constructed with somebody (or somebodies) else in mind; and we are better advised not to try to look through it, to some distant innerness that journalists, anthropologists, curators, or impresarios have assured us it conceals, but to look at it. When we do that, the image that comes to mind is not one of walls falling. It is of frames and scaffoldings being wheeled into place.

The festival is a composite of elements that would not appear together in any Indonesian context save the most artificial (state receptions, some museums inherited from the Dutch, some culture gardens set up by the government, upscale tourist hotels) and that are in various sorts of tension, some severe, with one another. It is an anthology, an assemblage of "the highest exemplars," as that same choreographer who has conquered the proscenium stage put it. It is certainly a form that has no real parallel in Indonesia, where eclecticism proceeds by way of mixed art syncretism, not greatest hits compilation. Traditionally, at least, the arts have developed in Indonesia through the absorption of "foreign" materials—Indian, Chinese, Mideastern, Oceanian, Western—into indigenous forms; by softening contrasts, not highlighting them.

And the festival is troubled, and energized, by the problem that troubles and energizes all anthologies that aspire to be more than inventories: determining principles of selection and balance, focus and comprehensiveness. This is difficult enough for a country that is relatively consolidated culturally, like Morocco or Mexico. For a scattered archipelagic country like Indonesia—with 180 million people, generally Islamic, but with important Christian and Hindu minorities, mostly Malayo-Polynesian, but with significant Chinese and Papuan populations, and with a host of languages, religions, ecologies, social structures, races, histories, political forms, colonial incursions, and levels of development—it is so delicate a matter as to loom behind virtually every act of national assertion.

Whether the stupa or the minaret, the kris or the prau, the staircase topography of upcountry rice terraces or the high-rise architecture of downtown Jakarta is taken, in this instance or that, to be the perceptible token of "Indonesia" is a consequential business. There are real investments, political, personal, moral, material, in "Indic Indonesia" or "Islamic Indonesia," "civilized Indonesia" or "folk Indonesia," "modern Indonesia" or "traditional Indonesia." Those are all categorizations that, aside from being porous and ill-defined, also clash, diverge, interact, or align in complicated and fateful ways. Like any diplomacy, then, "cultural diplomacy" has its designs and its dilemmas. Before a country can display itself abroad, it must decide what it wants abroad to imagine it to be.

III.

The cultural issues that vex Indonesians are as various as the country, and the festival simply avoids—reasonably enough, for a celebratory enterprise bent on providing a come-hither picture—a fair number of the more explosive of them. (Rising Islamism, for example: Suharto's recent return from the pilgrimage to Mecca has sent shock waves through the less pious parts of the population, already worried about fundamentalist attacks on "non-Islamic" aspects of indigenous culture.) But three of these explosive Indonesian issues, at least, are so all-pervading that they cannot be avoided, no matter how intense the desire to do so: the "Java-centric" issue, the "folk art/high art" issue, and the "modern/traditional" issue.

The first, the Java-centric issue, is the most particular in its precise form in Indonesia. In part, it is the mere result of the overwhelming demographic preponderance of Javanese in the country, a half to two-thirds, depending upon how and whom you count, with the remainder divided among seven or eight moderately large groups and literally hundreds of small ones—a core and periphery pattern that seems to have obtained for a thousand years.

But there is more to it than that. The great fluorescence of Indic civilization occurred in Java (and, after the fourteenth century, in Bali). The extraordinary trade expansion of the sixteenth century—the one that brought Islam and, on its heels, the Portuguese, Spanish, English, and Dutch—was centered on Java's north coast. The Dutch settled the headquarters, first of their East India Company, then of their colony, in Java. The rise of nationalism and the revolution against the Dutch mostly took place there. So did the popular massacres, in which thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, died in 1965-66, following the abortive coup in Jakarta for which the Communists and their allies, also mostly concentrated in Java, were held responsible. And today Java and the Javanese remain, despite strenuous efforts by the government to cloud the fact, and occasional efforts, sometimes violent, by non-Javanese to alter it, the axis upon which the life of the country turns. The Javanese contrast of *Jawa* and *Seberang* ("across," "facing," "opposite") may be an oversimplification of a more complex pattern, as well as a parochial view. Folk categories usually are. But it does catch the effective look of things. Folk categories usually do.

In contemporary Indonesia, in the state that has come into being over the past twenty-five years under Suharto and his army-directed "New Order" (the army itself is about 80 percent Javanese), the position of Java and of Javanese culture within the country as a whole has become an even more delicate matter. The propagation of a state ideology—the *Pancasila* or "Five Points" (Nationalism, Humanitarianism, Democracy, Social Prosperity, Faith in God) first set forth by Sukarno in 1945 as a call to arms at the outbreak of the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

revolution, but turned into a systematized civil religion by Suharto—has provided a summary of national identity to which everyone is expected to repair, but it has also raised fears that it is a vehicle for the progressive Javanization of the entire country. The resurgence of Islam as an international force has made the irony of the world's largest Muslim country being most generally perceived through Indo-Javanese imageries—gamelans, shadow plays, batiks, temples—ever more obvious, and to the zealous intolerable. And the rapid development of the various regions outside Java, timber in Borneo, oil in Sumatra, copper in West New Guinea, has added to the awareness of the issue and of the problems it poses for overall unity.

The second issue, about the distinction between folk art and high art, may seem to be a Western obsession, like narrative unity or vanishing-point perspective. But it is, in fact, an issue that tends to appear in some form or other in any complex society, in any society in which there exists a "great tradition" (Sanskritic in India, Iberian in Mexico, Islamic in Morocco) over and above the "little traditions" of village, tribe, chiefdom, or region. In Indonesia the simultaneous presence of multiple great traditions, Indian, Islamic, in some localities Christian, in some Chinese, as well as the vast range of quite variously structured little ones, Minangkabau, Dyak, Bugis, Papuan, gives the issue a particular sharpness. The weight that is to be given in any effort at cultural summary to architectural set pieces like Barabudur—the enormous ninth-century Buddhist monument in south-central Java—or developed mysteries like Sufi chanting, as against that which is to be given to longhouses, amulets, stools, boxes, sarongs, ladles, bird cages, and penis shields, is clearly of great moment. The picture that comes out, "civilized" accomplishment, subtle and refined, or "popular" craft, direct and vigorous, is quite different.

The problem is made more acute by the tendency, now quite general in the world, to regard the longhouse and penis shield sort of thing as "primitive," as natural outpourings of natural men, unreflected, anonymous, naive, beguiling; and to regard the Barabudur and chanting sort of thing as art, full stop: profound, deliberate, definitive of the soul and the soul's ambitions. A country seeking to recommend itself to another is not likely to want to promote the notion that it is culturally unsophisticated, and certainly not that it is "primitive." The need to celebrate its masterpieces, of which by definition there can be but a few, contained and set apart from ongoing life, and to celebrate the status of its arts in general, are both intense.

It is necessary, in other words, for such a country at once to embrace the distinction between high art and folk art, so as to establish the fact of great accomplishments, suitable to be mounted in the National Gallery or presented at the Kennedy Center beside the best of elsewhere, and to blur that same distinction, so as to prevent one's more ordinary, closer-to-home achievements from being sorted with the backward, the curious, the cute, the incidental. The elusive contrast between "real art" and "mere ethnology" becomes, suddenly, ideologically charged.

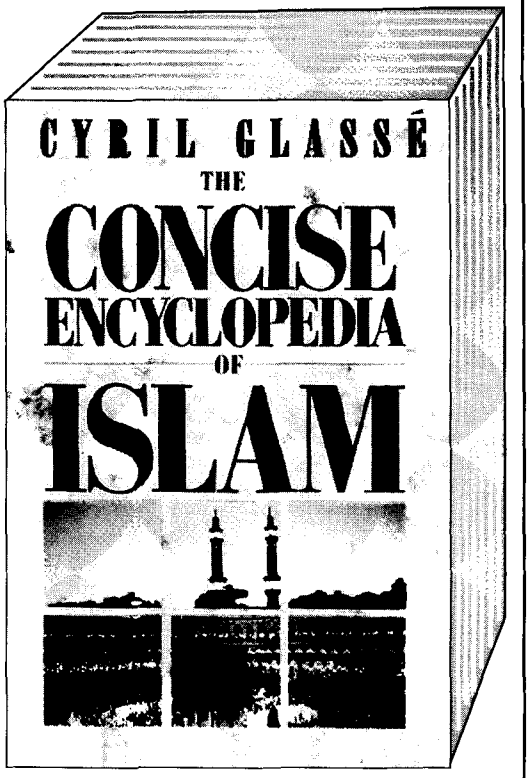
Finally, the third issue, the modern/traditional one, is perhaps the most familiar to us, who have passed in this century through so many efforts to work ourselves loose of the past or reconnect ourselves to it. Still, we do not always recognize that such efforts are even more determined in countries such as Indonesia (or Morocco or Mexico), where the tension between established forms, familiar and assuring, and innovative ones, anomalous and challenging, is especially great. When one enters onto the world stage as rapidly as these countries have, the question of the adequacy

"A GRAND, BEAUTIFULLY ILLUSTRATED BOOK"*

"One can wonder whether in all the human sciences there is a greater need for a reference work than for this one."
—Huston Smith

"An enormous amount of information, all of it fascinating. . . . A feast of fact and insight."
—*Washington Post Book World**

"Glassé has achieved a miracle, 1,200 entries all bearing the imprint of a single personality. . . . He deals with Islam not merely as a religion but also as a culture."
—*The Economist*



Paperback • $24.95

Also available from HarperCollins Canada Ltd.

HarperSanFrancisco
A Division of HarperCollins*Publishers*

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of one's heritage to the statement of one's condition—are Buddhas and betel-chewing really us?—is no longer remote and academic.

Thus, the bulletin of the quasi-official body that has general responsibility for the festival from the Indonesian side, the Nusantara Jaya Foundation, itself has noted that when the festival was being organized there was concern as to "whether Indonesia—a country where economic development is now the central theme of government—wanted to project an image of ancient traditions and quaint customs." Another article from *The New York Times*, this one marvelously headlined "THE JOE PAPP OF BALI FINDS HIMSELF IN A CULTURAL PICKLE," quotes the Balinese impresario I Made Bandem to the effect that "there is still no art with a capital 'A' in Bali," and says that "Mr. Bandem [a member of Parliament who has a master's from UCLA and a doctorate from Wesleyan] wants to change that," but finds himself roundly criticized "for commercializing sacred dances" and for making Bali's art into something it has never been, a professional activity, complete with stars, producers, conservatories, critics, and theater tickets. And in Indonesia itself, extremely popular "Broadway-style" song and dance productions by the playwright Riantiarno—*Suksesi* and *Opera Kecoa* ("The Cockroach Opera"), filled with images of businessmen rajas struggling with Kshatriyaesque army generals and public monuments that fall from the sky—have unleashed a storm of public controversy as to whether they are advancing Indonesian culture or trashing it.

Suksesi (a pun, of course, on both "succession" and "success," topics of some tenderness right now in Indonesia, as Suharto approaches what may or may not be his last election surrounded by charges of family corruption) was eventually shut down by the police because "the audience might be influenced to believe things that are not true." I owe my knowledge of it to a communication from the political scientist William Liddle, who reports:

> What I saw was a professionally crafted entertainment, a well-paced Broadway-style play ... that also incorporated a wide range of indigenous theatrical styles and conventions, from the low verbal comedy of the Surabaya folk theater to the sophisticated aesthetic of the central Javanese shadow play. Just the right combination of foreign and domestic, high and low, to attract the urban middle-class audience to which Riantiarno explicitly directs his work.

And I owe my knowledge of *Opera Kecoa* to an article by the drama scholar Mary Zurbuchen, who, quoting an official government statement that "we will continue to subsidize the vitality of the arts, modern as well as traditional," pointedly remarks, "[It is not] obvious ... just what these categories consist of.... It is sometimes difficult to distinguish purely 'traditional' arts from contemporary creations in traditional idioms, say, or innovative expressions that have a traditional feel but borrow elements from outside the tradition." And Zurbuchen continues:

> The touchstone of tradition in the arts has to do with perceptions of what really matters, what "belongs," what is tolerable within generally acceptable bounds.... [There is a] pervasive anxiety among the current generation of artists and teachers as to what the role of traditional art in contemporary society should be. Does it matter that [shadow play ballet] ... originated in the courts? Does this mean it is inherently "feudal" or "colonial"? Or can it still be relevant in independent Indonesia as entertainment with a changed message for an audience without the older elite's concern for spiritual and mystical values?... [The] current generation of Javanese artists ... has inherited a complex dilemma in which traditional norms of excellence, modern concerns for relevance, and art's ability to communicate with its audience make it difficult to know what kind of artist to be.

IV.

It is clear, then, that it's not just a question of whether the wine can travel. There are complexities on the sending end that dwarf those on the receiving one. The problems involved in staging performances or displaying artifacts for audiences ill-prepared to understand them in settings ill-constructed to accommodate them are indeed great. But those involved in creating a national persona out of clashing attitudes, cultural summary out of cultural swirl, are even greater. And the latter is what drives the Festival of Indonesia.

In that regard, the dispersed and invertebrate structure that its organizers have chosen—lots of small- or medium-sized performances and exhibitions, in lots of places, some of them unlikely, around the country, rather than the blockbuster mega-presentations often favored by such enterprises—has served it well, at least in avoiding delicate questions and direct confrontations. The main events, modest in size, limited in purpose, and strongly thematic, distribute themselves in the space "Java vs. Across," "high art vs. folk art," and "modern vs. traditional"—unconnected points in an unacknowledged grid. A bit like the country, the festival is archipelagic.

"The Sculpture of Indonesia" show, which is in fact the sculpture of Java (and a few other Indianized places) to the fifteenth century, is the most precisely located in that space as well as the most self-enclosed, and self-admiring, of the major presentations of the festival. (It also has the most upscale itinerary: Washington's National Gallery, Houston's Museum of Fine Arts, the Metropolitan in New York, the Asian Art Museum in San Francisco.) Confined to high art in Indic styles, to cakras, sivas, priest bells, and buddhas, the show takes a rigorously art historical and classical archaeological approach to its material—Java as Indonesia's Greece (or, perhaps better, its Rome: India is its Greece).

It is an approach that has hardly changed since Dutch scholars first set it forth in the 1920s. Its objects, some 100 or so, drawn from the famous sites of early Indonesia—Barabudur, Prambanan, Singasari—are treated, to quote the catalog, as a "group of art forms ... understood as appealing to critical taste and therefore superior in aesthetic quality," and they are presented in terms of foreshadowings of such quality in preclassic works, realizations of it (a "superb" Prajnaparamita, a "fine" Mahadeva) in classic ones, and recessions from it in postclassic ones. There is the grand, three-and-a-half-foot seated stone Buddha from Barabudur (one of the 504 Buddhas on the monument), with its distinctively Javanistic rounded face and body, closed eyes, and its hands infolded into its lap in meditative calm. There is the set of eighteen miniature, two- to four-inch, highly worked statuettes of Buddhist divinities—of the lamp, of the flute, of the drum, of song, of the exuberant dance, of the bow and arrow—each displaying its specialty in marvelously expressive postures. And there is the heart-shaped gold repoussé chastity plaque, adorned with the image of the falsely murdered heroine of a Javanese Othello-like legend (though, as it is Javanese, she comes back to life). Questions of iconography, of diffusion, of technique, of stylistic development, and most especially of hierarchical evaluation (which are masterpieces? which are not quite?) dominate. And the whole is presented as a picture of "underlying Indonesian ideals of beauty" that, it is held, continue to underlie the country's culture.

In the "Court Arts of Indonesia" exhibition, mounted at the Asia Society last autumn, then moved in turn to the Dallas Museum of Art, the Sackler Museum in Washington, and the Natural History

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Museum of Los Angeles County, the problems of cultural representation are, as this mixed itinerary suggests, more complexly addressed. As the exhibition deals with materials from some thirty-odd courts, large and small, scattered across the archipelago from Aceh in the west to Tidore in the east, it at least partially escapes the problem of Java-centrism, as its organizers quite consciously set out to do, even if the preponderant weight of the Javanese and Balinese courts in such a frame is impossible to disguise. And as it is concerned with all arts associated, in whatever capacity, with the courts, it at least partially escapes the high-art bias as well, even if shadow puppets, dance masks, and kris handles tend inevitably to dominate less celebrated objects.

Here, in a most innovative move, the focus on masterpieces and on universalistic, connoisseur-style evaluation, the standbys of art historical scholarship in the West, is put aside. A pan-Indonesian concept, neither vague and abstract like "the commingling of male and female" nor vague and esoteric like "the union of divinity and king," but concrete and accessible, is used to organize the exhibition: that of the heirloom, what Indonesians call *pusaka*. It is the objects, some highly wrought, some extremely simple, that the court families, now relics themselves, have conserved as proofs and signs of their vanished power that define "Court Art."

Halfway between our notion of an artwork and of an artifact, yet not assimilable to either, the *pusaka*—a water beaker from Bali, a bracelet from Sulawesi, a circumcision knife from Java, a spittoon from Sumatra, a twine bag from western Timor—represents culture less as abiding ideals than as stored away heritage: things people keep. It doesn't much matter whether you install them in a specialist gallery like the Asia Society, a fine arts museum like the Dallas or the Sackler, or a natural history repository like Los Angeles County's. These "history objects," material anchors in an imagined past, fit as well in the one as in the other.

As its very title announces, "Beyond the Java Sea," the third major exhibition of the festival, which has been mounted at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History (and later will appear in Houston and San Francisco), is expressly designed as a counterweight to Java-centrism. All the pieces, some 200 of them, are from outside Java and Bali. And as both its organization, by ethnic regions (Nias, Batak, Southeast Moluccas, Northwest New Guinea, and so on), and its objects (ancestor figures, head cloths, blowguns, door handles, boat ornaments, drums, and so on) demonstrate, it is firmly on the "traditional" and "folk art" side of things as well.

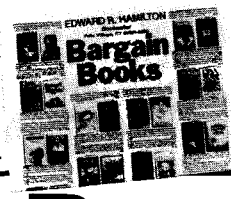
Thus it has to face the "primitivism" question from the start. "Such art forms [as those displayed here]," the catalog says in way of introduction,

> have sometimes been grouped together as "primitive" art, "tribal" art—or even ... "archaic" ... art. Each of these appellations invites misunderstanding. The chorus of scholarly complaints about the concept of "primitive" art has grown quite loud ... for good reasons, as the sophisticated (even cosmopolitan) art in this exhibit will illustrate.... Moreover, the continued use of terms such as "primitive," "tribal," and "archaic" ... perpetuates a postcolonial view of this art as evolutionarily antecedent to, rather than just different from, Western art forms.

The undermining of these demeaning "appellations" is carried out in the exhibition itself in two main ways: first, by selecting the objects to be displayed "with canons of Western connoisseurship in mind" rather than in terms of their ethnological significance; and second, by displaying them—an intricately painted Borneo war shield, a finely carved shell, and a palm-fiber boat prow—in such a way as to bring out native conceptions, or presumed such, of "aesthetic value." Unlike most exhibitions of this sort, curated (as this one is) by anthropologists, we are not faced with dioramas and display cases crowded with functionally associated items of varying degrees of crudeness and refinement, but with carefully arranged vitrine displays of a small number of especially well-worked ones: "exemplars of indigenous Indonesian aesthetics as well as masterpieces as defined by a Western collector's aesthetic." Though the result is uneven—the New Guinea material is disappointing, the Celebes material is stunning—the dissolving of what anthropologists call "material culture" into what art historians call "aesthetic objects" is thoroughgoing.

And so the threat of primitivism, tribalism, archaism, and backwardness is effectively exorcised:

> Two centuries ago ... Alexander Baumgarten first used the Greek word *aesthetikos* ... to designate the appreciation of art and beauty. Much ... has since been written about our aesthetic response to objects—both objects created to elicit an aesthetic response ("art by destination") and objects created for other purposes that nevertheless elicit an aesthetic response ("art by metamorphosis"). This emphasis on the aesthetic response produced by art permits a useful cross-cultural basis for studying art, since "art"



FREE CATALOG
Huge Selection
Lowest Prices

Bargain Books

Choose from recent publishers' overstocks, remainders, imports and reprints—up to 8,000 titles each month, including 600-1,500 new arrivals—most at savings of 50% to 80%.

We publish a new catalog every 4 weeks, each offering an immense selection from all major publishers, and with more books at $1.95, $2.95, $3.95 than you'll find anywhere else: **Politics,** Biography, Science, Art, Literature, Fiction, Health, Movies, Nature, Gardening and more. Something for everyone, from yesterday's best sellers to titles you never knew existed, most in limited supply. We normally ship within 24 hours with a moneyback guarantee.

Please send me your Free Catalog of Bargain Books.

Name

Address

City

State Zip

HAMILTON
Box 15-594, Falls Village CT 05031

The World's Largest Record Catalog

Discover the convenience of shopping from home for any CD, tape or LP in print. Our 200 pages of Rock, Jazz, Classical & Opera recordings is the world's largest music catalog. You'll find everything from Basie to Wagner, The Beatles to U-2.

BOSE EXPRESS MUSIC CATALOG

Now you can order your music by toll-free phone and get quick (UPS) home delivery.

Send $6.00 (refundable on your first order from the catalog) for our 45,000 title catalog with $50 in merchandise credits. New subscribers get 1 year of update catalogs **FREE**, covering new releases and musical specials. Absolutely no obligation or unrequested shipments.

Call ☎ 1-800-233-6357
or send to
Bose Express Music, W991,
The Mountain, Framingham, MA 01701
Fax: 508-875-0604

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

can then be defined as a human creation that produces an aesthetic response, and the aesthetic response of people in different cultures can be compared.

V.

If archaeological remains, dynastic keepsakes, and ethnographical items elevated to aesthetic objects have slipped with relative ease into appointed slots in the institutional structure of American art display (as have shadow plays, gamelan music, and court ballet), contemporary productions have experienced a good deal more trouble getting seen. "It was difficult," the catalog of *Modern Indonesian Art*, the main festival enterprise in this area, bitterly remarks, "to find galleries ... that were willing to be venues for this exhibition." Its curators, a group of American, Indonesian, and Dutch critics and collectors, managed to obtain only one full-scale showing, at Mills College in Oakland, though truncated versions were mounted in four other Western cities. (In the East, the Bronx Museum of the Arts, which originally agreed to house the exhibition, abruptly backed off, for reasons that remain obscure.)

There are a number of possibilities why contemporary art, and painting in particular, has been marginalized in this way. (The situation is no better for fiction, poetry, and drama, which, a small film exhibition aside, have virtually no place in the festival at all.) It could be, of course, that the work is inferior. But with painters of the power of the meditative abstractionist Ahmad Sadali, the magical realist Hendra Gunawan, and the calligraphic colorist A.D. Pirous, to say nothing of the compositional originality of Widayat or Popo Iskandar, that is clearly not the case.

The curators tend to blame the galleries' need "to put on shows that are likely to be critically successful and profitable," and the consequent emphasis on traditional genres when it comes to non-European, "exotic" art. It is all right for Western modernists, Picasso or Gauguin, to draw inspiration from non-Western arts. MOMA will celebrate them for it. The reverse, non-Western artists drawing inspiration from Western modernism, is condemned as mimicry and soul loss:

> Almost all the attention given to Indonesian art both inside and outside the country has focused either on folk art or classical ancient art. From 1950 to 1990 some eighty exhibitions of Indonesian art were held outside Indonesia, mainly in Europe and the United States.... All of these were exhibits of ethnographic or ancient art; of these twenty-seven alone dealt with traditional textiles.... There has never been in the United States a major exhibition of Indonesian modern art in museums or commercial galleries.

There is a good deal of truth in this. But again the constraints may lie as much on the sender as on the receiver. In a forming country, especially in one so marked with social tensions and cultural fault lines as Indonesia, contemporary art, whatever its intent, is inevitably caught up in foundational struggles as yet unresolved. During the 1965 upheavals, the leading association of Indonesian painters, writers, dramatists, and filmmakers was affiliated with the Communist Party, and when the Party was destroyed at the hands of the army, many of its members were killed or imprisoned. Gunawan, who has since died, served ten years; Pramoedya Ananta Toer, the country's leading writer, served fourteen, and he remains, his books banned, under city arrest in Jakarta. (The Suharto regime is especially sensitive to artistic resistance to its homogenizing tendencies. Students have recently been given long prison terms simply for selling Pramoedya's books, and many painters have found it politic to spend extended periods abroad.) Celebrating the richness of a broad and ageless "national heritage" is a good deal more comfortable for all concerned than exposing the tensions to which that richness has these days led.

Still, there is one form of "modern" art that the festival does not marginalize, but brings to the focus of attention: the festival itself. The dazzling achievement in an enormous range of arts that it places before us, the interpretive dilemmas of intercultural understanding that it forces us to reflect upon, and the social realities that, in spite of itself, it dramatizes—all of these make of it much more than a celebration or a circus. "Indonesia's day of maintaining a low profile are over," the announcement of the festival's opening proclaimed. "The 'sleeping giant' is stirring—stretching, putting its best face forward, and stepping into the limelight, soon to take her hour upon the stage." The worldly aesthetics of The Year of Living Culturally are indeed quite modern. •

Mean Streets

By Luc Sante

Damon Runyon by Jimmy Breslin

(Ticknor & Fields, 410 pp., $24.95)

The world that Damon Runyon (1880-1946) chronicled, in some ways invented, and in many ways personified, now seems impossibly remote. The configuration of chiselers, hoodlums, variety artistes, mountebanks, rum runners, fight promoters, touts, bookmakers, and gold diggers that populated the speakeasies and restaurants and cigar stores around Times Square in the 1920s and '30s was held together by the principle of the labor-free dollar. Today, while many might aspire to this condition, it is barely viable as a way of life, except in a heavily lacquered version, as in Las Vegas. Times Square itself, and the part of Broadway and Sixth, Seventh, and Eighth Avenues that runs through or near it, are unrecognizably altered by decay or faceless construction. And though Runyon's name is still known generally, and can even conjure up some roaring demimonde scenes in many minds (chiefly on the basis of *Guys and Dolls*, the musical posthumously based on his work), his books are all, at this writing, out of print in his own country. Hardly anyone under the age of 50 or 60 has ever read him.

It might seem like an exercise in mere nostalgia, therefore, for Jimmy Breslin to undertake a full-dress biography of Runyon in this day and age. Certainly it is not as if Runyon's writings were especially deserving of revival, since his felicities of style and his trademarked handle on time and place now appear all but undone by a sentimentality that reeks of falsehood. But then Breslin, who appears three times a week in *New York Newsday*, is virtually the last of the line of plain-spoken, story-telling, man-of-the-people columnists, a genealogy that begins long before Runyon but is imprinted with his shadow. You sense that this book represents for Breslin an acknowledgment of his roots. Furthermore, in telling the unpretty, unsentimental story of Runyon himself, and in a style that owes more than some-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

what to Runyon's, Breslin is at once saluting, showing up, and fulfilling the shirked task of his vocational forebear. The drinking and killing and greed that Runyon exploited to permit his square readers to feel warm and smug are here presented naked, and there is nothing cute in them, much as they are often entertaining. Runyon himself is a chilling character. Ironically, his voice is stronger when it appears in its real context, away from the Hollywood banalities of his plots.

Runyon was born in Colorado, the son of an alcoholic frontier newspaperman and his abused wife, who died of consumption when Damon was 8. The young Runyon grew up among saloons and whorehouses and public hangings, meanwhile educating himself via Kipling and Stevenson at the local public library. His adult life began when he was 12, and he plugged right into the newspaper life, with its attendant features of drinking, whoring, and so on; journalism at the time occupied a social niche somewhere between the circus and the railroad. After service in the Philippines during the Spanish-American War, he worked his way to Denver, where in 1909 he had a cataclysmic bout with alcohol that led him to swear off the stuff for the rest of his life. Soon thereafter he followed to New York a friend who had wormed his way into the good graces of the Hearst organization.

Runyon got a job on the old Hearst *American* as a sportswriter, and, per Breslin, his whole future career was decided the day he went to a Giants baseball game and observed two pitchers. Christy Mathewson—"Big Six"—was a clean-living, right-thinking whiz who had graduated from college; Bugs Raymond was a thug who played to the gallery, which repaid the favor by passing him down pitchers of beer that he drank on the spot. There was no contest in Runyon's mind; Mathewson may have been a saint and a hero, but Raymond made good copy. Runyon knew his bread was buttered on the left-hand side; and thereafter he shunned the company of the boringly respectable.

Among those who failed the triage was his wife, Ellen Egan, a former Denver society writer whom he sent for as soon as he got steady work. Once they were hitched, however, Runyon kept her sequestered. He failed to be present for the births of their two children, Damon Junior and Mary (he was covering Giants games on both occasions). As they grew up, he was erratically present in their lives; he doted on Junior, who came to despise him, and he ignored Mary, who adored him from afar. Ellen he abandoned to alcohol and despair.

Meanwhile he made the rounds of nightlife, usually with his pal and homeboy Gene Fowler, another boulevardier scribe, and he began collecting villains and tummlers and wiseguys and riffraff, as well as restaurateurs. The former category was headed by the ineffable Owney Madden, born of Irish stock in the English north country and come to New York to eliminate the Hudson Dusters and rule the West Side by fiat. The selection also included ambiguous familiars such as Horse Thief Burke and Regret, or Otto Biderman, also know as Abba Dabba, whose claim was as "a genius with mathematical." These types were more diverting than scary, and they could drop news and tell stories and run favors. Pre-eminent among the hosts was Leo Lindemann, who was nurturing a fledgling delicatessen business on 51st Street called Lindy's, which Runyon and his friends on both sides of the law took on as hangout and would elevate to the status of legend, and whose name today is perpetuated by a chain of tourist traps run by Restaurant Associates.

The uprisings that culminated in the Mexican Revolution of 1914-16 brought Runyon south of the border, by way of the Giants spring training camp in Marlin, Texas. This gave him the opportunity to add Pancho Villa to his string of underworld conquests. Whatever the merit or the necessity of the revolution, there is little question that Villa had more in common with Owney Madden than with Rosa Luxemburg. Villa, for his part, seems to have been as captivated by this thin-lipped, bespectacled groupie as the gringo gangsters were, and he bestowed upon Runyon an inscribed cigarette lighter set with a ruby. (Villa, illiterate peasant though he may have been, had an uncanny and prescient feeling for publicity: not only did he play the Hearst organization like a ukulele, managing both to raid Mrs. Hearst Senior's ranch and to garner glamorous mentions in the papers, but he assisted in such stunts as re-enactments of raids for the newsreel cameras, making the Mexican Revolution the first truly modern war.)

Back in Gotham, Runyon reinserted himself into the demimonde in time to get a ringside seat for Prohibition, that vast social game in which most of his cronies and informants rose from local fame to power in the world. By this time he had collected such further notables as the wizard Arnold Rothstein and every barfly's favorite politician, Jimmy Walker. Runyon only drew the line at murderous psychopaths, such as Dutch Schultz, whom self-respecting gangsters regarded as a speck, and Vincent Coll, whom few even regarded. Runyon knew everyone and everyone knew him. He was considered good people, a mug who would never betray secrets or delicate knowledge for mere copy; he drew enough from everyday matters without having to be indiscreet, as distinct from his counterpart on the *Graphic* and then the *Mirror*, the voluble and fairly stupid Walter Winchell.

Runyon's routine was elegantly simple. He would arise circa noon, make his way to Lindy's, and park himself, eventually relocating to various nightspots as the action ran:

> Gangsters, who are in that trade because they don't want to work, spent nearly all their hours seated. A gangster needs wind and limb for only the shortest of dashes, the few odd yards from his car to that of the man he is going to shoot, and thence to return. A big gangster like Rothstein didn't have to put out even that much effort. He could sit for long hours on almost anything that didn't have a nail sticking out of it. But when you get into championship sitting, and you have a guy like Runyon, who starts his thirteenth hour with a thin smile, the realization strikes that something more than a hard bottom is needed, that imagination must control mind and body.

And Runyon's streamlined style eliminated the need to chase. Stories came to him.

Cathedral

It is a perfect day to remember your belly,
the religious facade of your shimmering white
surrender on the sidewalk in front of the deli
on R Street, where I held you tight.

You used to sit at a little table, a pink
book about Picasso in your lap, a doctrinaire
look in your eyes. I bought you a drink
and later took you to my lair.

The exchange was extraordinarily complex.
Brutal myths became so colorfully private.
Your lips, your lips, your lips—I took sex
from everything you looked at, everything you ate.

Then those small, pink Picassos caught up with us.
A new air, a new light gave us a sense
of perfection. I began to notice how the focus
blurred, how lyrical was my embrace of absence.

TERENCE WINCH

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The closest anyone came to being Runyon's mentor was a character named E. Phocian Howard, a man of wealth and taste who had parlayed a journalistic career into ownership and editorship of *The New York Press*, a rag that had seen many incarnations over the decades but that he had remade into a tipsheet for both horses and stocks. The paper did not much truck with style or social commentary, but it permitted its helmsman to grow fat on graft. Howard was a reader, however, and he recognized in Runyon someone who could leave a more enduring mark on the world of letters than mere daily column inches. He pointed out to Runyon that the latter owned a whole world of talk and bluster and real menace. Runyon agreed and recognized his opportunity intermittently, on occasions such as when a low acquaintance named Butch tried to talk him into going along on a safe job for which a live baby was to function as the front. Runyon knew such scenes couldn't be bettered by anyone's imagination, and yet he failed to act.

The tide turned on November 8, 1928, when Arnold Rothstein was shot and killed in the Park Central Hotel. Runyon had been on the periphery of this event, having sat with Rothstein at Lindy's beforehand and known that three thieves were furious with the gambler, who had lost a reputed $284,000 to them in a card game but had delayed payment so that he could parlay the stake into a huge wager on the presidential election. In the aftermath of Rothstein's killing, Runyon conducted his own investigation, not primarily for the benefit of his newspaper. Interrogating one Red Martin Bowe, he asked about the epochal card game that had led to the grudge:

> "How long had you been playing?"
> "It went on for twenty-six hours and does not stop, yeah?"
> "How did you do?"
> "I lose."
> "What about Meyer Boston?" Runyon said.
> "He wins."

The interview was, apparently, akin to Newton's apple and Archimedes' bath. The present tense, the lack of contractions—a style was born. A year or so later, Runyon began writing stories for the first time since his autodidactic youth.

The stories were printed, mostly in *Cosmopolitan* (a rather different magazine than its present incarnation), and several more were made into movies, two of them by Frank Capra, who in several ways resembled Runyon: the common touch, the narrative facility, the groaning sentimentality, the essential falseness. Runyon's stories possess real verve, vivid if not always credible characters, an inherent if relatively cheap irony owing to the schoolboy cadences of the uncontracted prose, and an invariable little twist at the end engineered to give the reader a warm glow. They are the products of a large talent and a fund of gutter wisdom employed in the service of greeting cards. Here and there are stories (one called "Sense of Humor" comes to mind) that possess genuine bite; but the rest, through angling for the big ticket, have become mere period pieces.

Runyon's temporary assets have become liabilities over time, with the wearing off of novelty. His full line of shtick is on display in every paragraph:

> There is no doubt but what Joey Perhaps is bad company, because the last I hear of him he is hollering copper on a guy by the name of Jack Ortega, and as a result of Joey Perhaps hollering copper, this Jack Ortega is taken to the city of Ossining, N.Y., and placed in an electric chair, and given a very, very, very severe shock in the seat of his pants.

In this randomly drawn entry (from a story called "Undertaker Song") we find: a pedantic insistence on the tense and non-contraction factors (the real Broadway lizards were never that consistent), a mania for repetition, a tendency to cushion the slang with coy phrasing, a compulsion to dot every i (his models, again, would have said "up the river" or maybe just "Ossining"), and, in the last phrase, a dose of irony that weighs maybe 1,600 pounds stripped (the two extra "verys" break the scale). What all this amounts to is a contemptuous condescension toward his subjects. He was evidently obsessed with them, but he also thought they were children, and depicted them as such; his animating them in nursery tales follows as a matter of course. (For an illuminating contrast, it is worthwhile to look at A.J. Liebling's reportage on characters of precisely the same ilk, in pieces such as "Tummler" and "The Jollity Building." Liebling respected his lowlifes, admired their inventiveness and nerve, and laughed with, not at, them.)

Runyon became better known and better off. He married a second time, to Patrice Amati, half his age, whom he had met in Mexico when she was barely adolescent. ("She said, 'I want to live on the red board.' This was a reference to the red light spelling out the word 'Official' when race results were put up on the pari-mutuel board.") He eventually went out to Hollywood himself to produce pictures, and by and by lost Patrice to younger men. In 1944 he was diagnosed with throat cancer as a result of his incessant smoking. Two years later, after numerous painful operations, he was dead. A cancer fund was established in his memory and large checks poured in, from people like Frank Costello.

Breslin tells the whole story with gusto and relish, cramming in anecdote upon anecdote, stretching out to fill in ancillary information and bounding back to the fore with perfect timing, constructing hugely entertaining set pieces. (There is a particularly priceless one of Al Capone hiring an orchestra to accompany his humming Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue.") Runyon's style is infectious, and Breslin plays with it with glee, skimming into the present tense, dipping in and out of the vivid language of that day. Younger readers may, in fact, wish for a glossary when Breslin casually libels this or that forgotten lounger as a "lobbygow" or a "bindlestiff." He tosses off ultra-Runyonisms ("He wanted to be a celebrity. In [Joe] Adonis's case, this was like placing a baby in the vicinity of diphtheria") that are actually more ferocious than anything to be found in the cozy pages of Runyon himself.

The book does have problems. They have to do mainly with the frame that

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION (Act of August 12, 1970: Section 3685, Title 39, United States Code) 1A. Title of publication: THE NEW REPUBLIC 1B. Publication number: 00286583 2. Date of filing: October 1, 1991 3. Frequency of issue: weekly except 1/14, 7/22, 8/26, 9/23, 12/23&30. 3A. Number of issues published annually: 48 3B. Annual subscription price: $69.97 4. Complete mailing address of known office of publication: 1220 19th St., NW, #600, Washington, D.C. 20036 5. Complete mailing address of general business offices of the publisher: 1220 19th St., NW, #600, Washington, D.C. 20036 6. Names and addresses of publisher, editor-in-chief, editor, managing editor: Publisher: Joan M. Stapleton, 1220 19th St., NW, #600, Washington, D.C. 20036. Editor-in-Chief: Martin Peretz, 1220 19th St., NW, #600, Washington, D.C. 20036. Editor: Hendrik Hertzberg, 1220 19th St., NW, #600, Washington, D.C. 20036. Managing Editor: Dorothy Wickenden, 1220 19th St., NW, #600, Washington, D.C. 20036. 7. Owner: Martin Peretz, 1220 19th St., NW, #600, Washington, D.C. 20036. Anne L. Peretz, 1220 19th St., NW, #600, Washington, D.C. 20036. 8. Known bondholders, mortgagees, and other security holders owning or holding 1% or more of total amount of bonds, mortgages, or other securities: None. 9. Not applicable. 10. Extent and nature of circulation: Average number of copies each issue during preceding 12 months: A. Total copies printed: 115,799 B. Paid circulation: 1. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors: 4,081 2. Mail subscription: 94,537 C. Total paid circulation: 98,618 D. Free distribution by mail, carriers, or other means, samples and complimentary, and other free copies: 3,749 E. Total distribution (sum of C and D): 102,367 F. Copies not distributed: 1. Office use, leftover, unaccounted, spoiled after printing: 1,233 2. Return from news agents: 12,199 G. Total (sum of E and F): 115,799 Actual number of copies of a single issue published nearest to filing date: A. Total number of copies printed: 118,181 B. Paid circulation: 1. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors: 3,952 2. Mail subscription: 96,294 C. Total paid circulation: 100,246 D. Free distribution by mail, carriers, or other means, samples, complimentary, and other free copies: 4,983 E. Total distribution (sum of C and D): 105,299 F. Copies not distributed: 1. Office use, leftover, unaccounted, spoiled after printing: 1,136 2. Returns from news agents: 11,816 G. Total (sum of E and F): 118,181 11. I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete. (signed) Patricia A. Najda, Circulation Manager.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Breslin drops on his story, a frame that on close inspection begins to resemble a horse collar. He begins his book with a ponderous fantasia that has him being clutched by phantom arms reaching from the filing cabinets in the Hearst morgue at the University of Texas research center. This conceit nominally functions the way montages did in old movies: there would be Jimmy B. on the job, musing of old crimes and old city desks, and the frame would dissolve into r..ling calendar pages and then process shots of Broadway street scenes six decades ago. It also stands in for an apparatus, since we learn from it that Breslin dug through old files and was in his youth privy to reminiscences by aged contemporaries of Runyon's. There is nothing else by way of notes or references, which of course are not necessary, although the curious reader might wish for some provenance for a few of the woollier stories, such as the one detailing Mussolini's personal intervention in Patrice's affair with the manager of an Italian bank in New York, which Il Duce feared might bear dire consequences upon his coverage in the Hearst papers. Fact and rumor lose their borders over time, but it might be nice to know whether a doozy like this one emanates from printed matter or from saloon talk. An index would have been handy as well.

Part two of the frame follows up the tragicomic story of Patrice, whose possession of a family heirloom, the Amati diamond, was so firmly established that it became collateral for bank loans and, after Runyon's death, when Patrice's room was burglarized, men nearly went to jail for its sake. The trouble was that it never existed. The story is both funny and melancholy, and does not matter a great deal. What is disquieting, however, is that Breslin segues from this anecdote to his final image. In 1961, he relates, a train called the Cotton Picker Special rolled from Des Moines to Atlanta bearing ninety-nine John Deere cotton pickers, each of which could do the work of ninety field hands and save at least $25 per bale. The poor blacks of the South were consequently pushed out of their jobs and their shacks and climbed aboard buses bound for New York City. Thus, "Broadway would no longer be the place of guys and dolls."

It is true that Runyon's city was finished. Maybe Repeal did something to kill it, and the war certainly contributed. The G.I. Bill had a major effect, as its housing-loan provisions sent tens of thousands of city-dwellers to the suburbs in the postwar decade. Birth rates rose; land values went up and down and up again; the whole job spectrum shifted several times—all these matters altered life in the center of the metropolis. And then there was Robert Moses. Breslin cannot be unaware of this complex scenario, and yet his choice of final image drops in out of the blue and gives every appearance of placing the blame on the most vulnerable segment of the population. The conclusion is a shock—nothing in the previous 400 pages has prepared the reader for it, and no amount of rhetorical finessing can make it acceptable. The choice is so apparently random that it can only be wanton.

In his newspaper column Breslin has been sounding the death knell for New York with increasing volume recently. He has also been given to bursts of hysteria, such as the race-baiting to which he semi-publicly subjected a *Newsday* colleague of Asian descent a few years ago. His column has often appeared a battleground between his good sense and his gift for empathy on the one hand, and his difficulty in coping with the complexities of present-day urban reality on the other. *Damon Runyon* seems to have been something of an escapist venture for him, as an evocation of the lost city of his youthful aspirations. Evoke it he does, in rich and handsome fashion; the stories and the language have a vigor and harsh truth that keep them alive and preserve them from mere nostalgia. But the cold shower at the end gives the whole enterprise an unreal and desperate cast. It is not merely an affront, it is an uncanny act of self-sabotage.

LUC SANTE is the author of *Low Life: Lures and Snares of Old New York* (Farrar, Straus & Giroux).

Tawana and the Professor

BY JONATHAN RIEDER

The Alchemy of Race and Rights by Patricia Williams

(Harvard University Press, 263 pp., $24.95)

For African Americans more than other American minorities, the personal and the political have always been painfully entangled. In the 1960s black nationalism publicized, and in its loftier versions sublimated, feelings of wound and pride, stigma and defiance, that long had appeared in more inchoate forms, such as the adulation of Adam Clayton Powell Jr. and other "race men." The elaborate game that ensued when Jesse Jackson thought that Michael Dukakis "dissed" him by not notifying him in advance of his choice of a running mate—indeed, the saddening and disturbing centrality of the theme of "somebodyness" throughout Jackson's career—attests to these powerful links between personal identity and political life.

Whatever its virtues, a politics of racial identity carries certain liabilities in a liberal and pluralist polity. The conviction of some African Americans that "we're still in apartheid now" denotes the need to remember, and thereby pays fit homage to the ancestors; but it also produces a politics of obsessive, resentful memory that distorts American reality, denies the reality of change, and bristles with an insistence on difference. And the exquisite sensitivity to slight straddles a fine line between a self-confident refusal to remain silent and a teched paranoia. What is real and what is imagined, what is a projection of the self and what lies beyond it, may become hopelessly scrambled.

Despite the gains that blacks have made since the civil rights movement, Patricia Williams reminds us, the dilemmas of separateness and belonging, remembering and forgetting, hurting and healing, have not vanished. This psychic underside of relations between the races endures even, or perhaps especially, for many successful and professional blacks, who live along the seam between black society and white society. But in the end Williams's own struggles, as she recounts them in this odd book, provide a stark warning: the consciousness of race is not only a way to recover the self, it is also a way to consume it.

Admittedly, as a citizen of David Lodge country, Williams makes for a weird sample, and there is a way in which her book could be read as a self-parody of a certain region of academia. A professor of law at the University of Wisconsin, she is a black feminist scholar, a devotee of critical legal studies, and a postmodernist extraordinaire.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

She attends symposia with titles like "Voices of the Excluded." She likes semiotics but not hegemony. She is against boundaries and for transgression. And she practices the canon-busting that she preaches: her book mixes critical theory, literary exposition, hallucination, autobiographical confession, even legal scholarship. Its overwrought section titles—"Trial by Text: A Sequence of Sublimation," "The Incorruptible Simplicity of Being: A String of Crystalline Parables"—work overtime to declare an identity: I am not a boring pedant. No straight law review notes on the Uniform Commercial Code for me.

In the deconstructionist terrain that Williams inhabits, people love the unobvious: better silences and absences than what is said or present. For her, the cool formalism of law and its technicalities conceal the passion and the individuality of human beings; the fiction of contract as the voluntary consent of autonomous individuals disguises the collective forces that impinge on all of us. Law is thus a party to deception and denial. And so the mix-and-match syncretism of her book furthers a larger goal that does not really concern law so much as the social context within which law unfolds. She wishes to retrieve the legal unconscious, the tangle of power and ideology and property that lawyers allegedly repress and enforce.

What law and Americans prefer not to talk about is mainly race and racism. Williams's mission is to break through this genteel avoidance. But what *she* remains silent about is significant, too. The dynamics of class and culture that reproduce the underclass, and all the afflictions that go with them, barely appear in her version of black life. She never squarely confronts the import of the very different life chances of people in the two black nations (for there *are* two black communities in this country, one considerably more dispirited than the other), or the rival experience of African-American and Caribbean-American blacks, or the diminished role of race in explaining all sorts of apparent differences and altercations between blacks and whites. To take only one example: it is true that police are more likely to use excess force against blacks, but even this distinctiveness fades when one takes into account the greater black involvement in situations that disproportionately elicit the zeal of the police.

These omissions implicate Williams in a larger and more disturbing phenomenon: the new racialist sensibility that is now abroad in the land, according to which the single most significant characteristic of an individual is the color of her or his skin, and white racism is the central explanation for all black plight. Cutting across the classes, reducing complexities to simplicities, reproducing the very analysis of society that it set out to refute, the racialist vision serves as balm, and as a source of political solidarity. It appeals both to the angry alienation of the ghetto and to the Afrocentric members of the black intelligentsia.

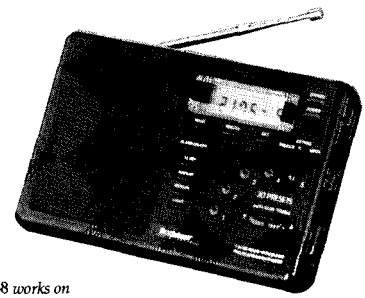
For Williams, all the ambiguities of the black condition reduce to a racism that is cosmic in character and in duration. As she puts it a little awkwardly, blacks remain in a "limbo of disownedness." They "are analogically positioned exactly as they were during slavery or Jim Crow." Thus the media glare that awaited Tawana Brawley before Sharpton, Mason, and Maddox spirited her away was a meta-rape, equivalent to the tangible rape that Williams's great-great-grandmother suffered when she was sold into slavery.

Racism, in Williams's telling, takes a highly allusive form: blacks are victims of the symbolic violence that flows from "invisibly reinforcing structures of thought, language, and law" such as the mythic imagery of ghetto animality. This structuralist twist provides a most ethereal and unexpected rationale for affirmative action: since equal opportunity really symbolizes not neutrality but white presence (and thereby contains an oblique trace of the blacks who are excluded), only affirmative action can make them a symbolic presence. It will speak them back into being. Affirmative action is "as mystical and beyond-the-self as an initiation ceremony."

That an African-American intellectual should find inspiration in contemporary cultural theory makes a sort of sense: Who better than blacks to grasp the importance of naming and name-calling to identity, the entanglement of language and power, the doubleness of reality? Why should black intellectuals be forced to speak in the vernacular, as if jive talk were a badge of authenticity? If Williams wants to talk about "floating signifiers," what is the harm? Anyway, she is not alone. In detecting the parallels between the signification of literary theory and the "signifying monkey" of black folk tales, Henry Louis Gates Jr. did some signifying of his own: raising up the race, and the folk tradition, by associating them with Harold Bloom. But his pairing of Derrida and H. Rap Brown was also a way of getting over: it cut the fancy tradition down to size and celebrated the savvyness of the folk. Williams lacks Gates'

Get an ear on the whole world, with the...

AS-138 4-Band Digital Shortwave Receiver only $79.95*



*But read this ad for an even better deal!

• The AS-138 works on three AA-cells (not included) or, with any AC/DC adapter, off regular household current. The AS-138 4-Band Digital Shortwave Receiver is beautifully styled and measures 4½" x 7½". It's good for traveling—use it as a radio/snooze/alarm.

Through the advanced technology of Phase Lock Loop, frequency synthesizer circuitry, and the precision of digital tuning you can now listen to shortwave broadcasts from all over the world. In addition to the 3.2 to 7.3 and 9.5 to 21.75 MHz shortwave bands, you also get flawless reception on your standard AM/FM broadcast bands. With this superior receiver you can pre-set up to twenty stations and simply tune them in by the push of a button. You also get auto-seek tuning, auto alarm and the *AS-138 Band Digital Shortwave Receiver* continuously displays time on its digital readout.

As the exclusive United States importers of Rodelvox products we can therefore bring you this unit for just $79.95. But we have an even better deal: ***Buy two for $159.90, and we'll send you a third one, with our compliments—absolutely FREE!*** Stay in touch with news from around the globe and here at home. Get your *AS-138 4-Band Digital Shortwave Receiver* today!

FOR FASTEST SERVICE, ORDER
TOLL FREE (800) 882-3050
24 hours a day, 7 days a week
Please give order **#5391B028**. If you prefer, mail check or card authorization and expiration. We need daytime phone number for all orders and issuing bank for charge orders. Add shipping/insurance: $4.25 for one; $12.75 for three. Add sales tax for CA delivery. You have 30 day return and one year warranty. We do not refund shipping charges.

Looking for a bargain? Come in and visit our Catalog Outlet in San Francisco.

since 1967 haverhills of San Francisco

139 Townsend Street, San Francisco, CA 94107

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

arch playfulness. The ponderousness of her critical theory and the preciousness of her strained literary efforts only diminish the force of the earthy experience of race that she wants to recover.

No matter how much Williams gussies it up, her "argument" consists of a hodgepodge of anecdotes and ruminations that miss the mark as often as they reach it. Her answer to the common law's "man on the Wrexham Bus," that is, her idealized average citizen, is the homeless man on the New York subway (or the dean of the law school, or anyone else she bumps into as she wanders about the world). She has immense faith in her own powers to divine. From her window she spots a black baby sitter with a white child and pronounces her the Universal Mammy and "Embodied Sorrow." When her students fail to respond as she wishes, they "growl with the restless urge to go shopping." When parents try to reassure a child about a large dog, they practice authoritarianism: they "universalize their relative bigness so completely that they obliterate the subject positioning of their child's relative smallness."

My point is not that Williams should be running focus groups or opinion surveys. Personal essays, newspaper columns, and novels often illuminate our social condition better than sociological treatises, because they are free of the constraints of the disciplines, and because those who produce them are often steeped in the reality that they seek to uncover. Williams's problem is that she seems utterly to lack a natural feel for the texture of the streets. Her projections onto her subjects are clumsy and ideologically predetermined. Hunger for the brilliant insight and the dashing analogy overwhelms the people she observes.

Homeless people, after all, are not victims simply of "dramas of disownedness." They are victims also of hallucinations, drug addiction, violence, poverty, and plain hard luck. Tawana Brawley ("a tragically powerful embodiment of my ambiguous, tenuous, social positioning") suffered not from "totemic evil" or demonic fears of "otherness," but from her own problems and from champions who cynically used her to perpetrate a racial fraud. And the equivalence between the Mammy of slavery and the contemporary baby sitter is misplaced: a racist hierarchy of preference does still linger, but surely nannies from Ireland and Kansas suffer many of the same indignities that African Americans do, and the dynamics of jobs in secondary and underground labor markets explains much of their shared plight. Countless Barbadian and Jamaican baby sitters know how to define the kind of labor they are willing to perform, and control the terms of the workplace, and demand respect as professionalized caregivers.

Williams's indifference to the hard edges of reality, her methodological nonchalance, her principled genre-blurring, contain a number of ironies that have often plagued the cultural politics of the left. Good contemporary humanist that she is, she operates with an interpretive imperiousness that does not respect the humanity of her subjects. Free of the bothersome constraints of evidence, she imposes her meanings on their experience. And for someone who is preoccupied with the way that language falsifies reality, Williams is cavalier about the recklessness of her language and the violence it does to the phenomena that she seeks to illuminate. She accuses lawyers of craving bright lines, but *she* creates racial bright lines, through the starkness of her racial language, her reduction of most racial encounters to dramaturgies of racism, her politics of race-based remedies.

The Alchemy of Race and Rights, in short, fails miserably as rigorous analysis. Williams might counter that the language of rigorous analysis reflects a limiting and male notion of truth. Still, her book may be read as an intriguing account of one person's painful and all-consuming experience of race in everyday life, as well as a reminder that integration brings in its wake new problems of managing identity, friendship, and conversation. Slights constantly befall Williams. Her parents taught her to look whites in the eye, to assert the legitimacy of her presence, but she betrays that lesson with a diffidence that mocks the sacrifices of the civil rights movement. She avoids going to the market, in 1991, because she fears being alien and suspect. At a Benneton's in Soho, a clerk refuses to buzz her in because, Williams is certain, she is black.

Back on campus, things are hardly better. During law school, "Everyone was running around telling black people that they were very happy to have us there but, after all, they did have to lower the standards." At Dartmouth, a posse of sprinting adolescent whites from a basketball camp jostle her as they dash by on the sidewalk, and she explodes, "Don't I exist for you. See me. And deflect, Goddamit." Her colleagues at places like Stanford want her to "lighten up," to stop always carping about sexist and racist exam questions and making everything such a damn hassle.

And race intrudes in a more eerie way, as a call from the past. As a student at Harvard Law School, she feels estranged and unwanted. She consoles herself with thoughts of all the lawyers in the family of her white great-great-grandfather, who bought and raped Williams's then 11-year-old great-great-grandmother. "The image of this self-centered child molester became the fuel for my survival in the dispossessed limbo of my years at Harvard, the Bakke years." She tracks down her great-great-grandmother's bill of sale. The find "irretrievably personalized my experience of the law." And so the chasm of the centuries that divide then and now closes. Distinctions blur. The primal contract stands for all contracts, for law itself, as the illusion of freedom that veils unfreedom. The Baby M surrogacy case is simply a repetition of her ancestor's fate; a little girl turned into property, deprived of power, stolen from her biological mother. And so on.

Williams can't stop reliving primal hurts. As a result, she can never experience time, or citizenship, in the way that white Americans do—in a shared way. The present is an arena of endless repetitions. "The individual unifying cultural memory of black people is the helplessness of living under slavery or in its shadow. I grew up living in the past." Vulnerability as much as an expansive love of black people underlies these transmigrations: people of color can't "admit ... our desire to be included in [an] alien and hostile" world. This generalized view of black dependency and self-hatred, which African-American scholars have been abandoning for decades, she derives from a childhood trauma. She was 3 years old when she realized that the word "colored," the "totemic evil" her white friends had been discussing, encompassed her. She beheld herself as something horrific. The experience left her with an aliveness to the racial implications of things—the quality of a smile, polar bears, her makeup: "I stare in the mirror ... I buff my nails, paving the way for my race ... I mascara [sic] my eyelashes that I may be 'different' from all the rest."

HOW TO EXECUTE AN AGENCY

by E. Waterhouse Allen

Wicked, informed satire about Bureaucratic Types you should recognize! Discover from 50 years work in human service agencies. 1st edit., $3.95.

BARK-BACK
P.O. Box 325, Glenshaw, PA 15116

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

This is Williams's dilemma: she does not want her humanity dwarfed by her race, and she wants to be viewed as an individual, but she also does not want to be ignored, and to deny her race is to deny her self. Her evocations are occasionally poignant, but she never makes clear how one person's feelings can illuminate our understanding of law and policy. And the extravagant confessional strain in her book is murky in still a more basic respect. It is simply impossible to tell if Williams is for real. The confessionalism often seems mannered, and the expansive claim that "I leave nothing of my self out" is of course overblown. In fact, she is something of a tease, giving the snippet of a biographical revelation only to blunt its force: just as she is about to make us really grasp the wound of her rejection as a 3-year-old, she shrouds herself in cerebral language ("I am still trying to overcome the polarity of my own vulnerability") that puts the wound at bay—from us, and from herself.

One slowly gets the feeling, then, that Williams is not being open so much as playing at being open. She is always parading personae. In her own telling, she is a melodramatic, histrionic personality, forever alert to the effect of her performances on others. (Blacks, she says, in an astonishing concession to an old stereotype, dance with abandon; but she herself dances with too powerful a sense of display to achieve oneness with her body.) Williams offers the dictum that "subject positioning is everything," but her own initial positioning as a crazy, eccentric, disheveled woman only magnifies the problem of credibility that inheres in her free-wheeling method. Either she is "crazy," and her musings on race are paranoid and hysterical, or she is just gaming, playing with the posture of being crazy, and thus playing with us. In which case, her self-proclaimed radical honesty is just a language game, and carries no warrant of truth.

In either case, given her belief that reality is a rhetorical event, why should we count her view of race as anything more than just one more "take" on race, interesting or not as the case may be, of equal status to the various takes of Arsenio Hall, Bernhard Goetz, Clarence Thomas, or a homeless person on the IRT? The same precarious grasp on reality and confusion of self and word that undermine Williams's cultural analysis thus undermine her renderings of her own racial experience. Her narcissism makes her reader skeptical. Can she tell the difference between dramas in the world and her love of drama? Is she discovering subtle aspects of racism, or is she imagining them? Does her excessive self-consciousness really tell us anything about the plight of being black in America? Is she lonely because she is black, or because she is always setting people on edge? Are students dismayed by the power of her critical legal analysis, as she grandiosely thinks, or is she a bad and arrogant teacher?

Williams's autobiographical writing confirms the very suspicion that she seeks to fight: that the cry of racism, despite the brutalities of racism, can function as an excuse, as an incantation, as an indulgence. From time to time she verges on grasping that her preoccupation with race may amount to a flight from responsibility for her own actions. Perhaps, she writes, she is one of those "who fill in meaning where none was meant." As she concedes, who can blame her students for feeling confused? "I'm confused too ... little bits of law and pieces of everyday life fly out of my mouth in weird combinations." And later: "I am babbling ... I am tangled in gleaming, bubbled words." Yet the doubts that she introduces, in her self and in her reader, symbolize the danger of her brand of scholarship and her more general approach to race. She has lost her way. She is stranded in language. She can no longer distinguish the self within and the world without.

And so Williams does share something with Tawana Brawley, after all: not the sisterhood of black woman victims, but a tendency to confuse private difficulties with racial afflictions, and a complicity in racial spectacles that introduce unreality into public life. Williams, too, is consecrated to the reinforcement of visions of black victimization. And her politics of personal authenticity, too, is doomed to disappointment. The state can affirm the dignity of each individual, and it can affirm respect for our different communal traditions; but the state cannot take away our solitude. Politics cannot make you whole. •

CORRESPONDENCE *continued from page 6*

Firm denial

To the editors:

A couple of corrections to the article "Bad Cops" by Michael Waldman (September 9). The wife of Senator Jeff Bingaman was not a member of nor employed by Akin, Gump, and this firm never represented Senator Alan Cranston. This firm represented Senator John McCain.

JOHN M. DOWD
Washington, D.C.

The writer is an employee of Akin, Gump, Hauer & Feld.

TRB *continued from page 4*

or only that the rules can't change when the nominee is black?

Clearly there have been inconsistencies in recent confirmation episodes. That is partly because the rules are in flux and partly just because politics is not an exact science. (Kennedy came after Bork and Douglas Ginsburg, when nobody was in the mood for a fight.) But also clearly, in hindsight, Kennedy and Souter got through too easily, and many senators now feel they failed to exercise their advice and consent duty properly. Should that mean they are stuck—unable to exercise that duty properly in the future? What about the ancient legal doctrine (I don't know if it is "natural law" or not) that "two wrongs don't make a right"?

A bit of perspective, please. Holding Clarence Thomas to a higher standard than Kennedy and Souter were held to may be unfair to him, but putting someone on the Supreme Court who doesn't belong there would be unfair to Americans for the next four decades. Everyone is dissatisfied with the confirmation process. Judiciary Chairman Joe Biden is even planning to hold hearings on confirmation hearings. But there is nothing wrong with the confirmation process that a few more rejections wouldn't cure.

More rigorous and detailed questioning of Supreme Court nominees, not less—and rejection of those who clam up or dissemble—is the proper answer to the complaint in TNR's backhanded endorsement of Thomas (October 7) that "a jurist of intellectual distinction is no longer eligible for the Supreme Court of the United States." Only if presidents think they can get away with nominating blank slates will blank slates (or, in the Clarence Thomas case, erased slates) have an edge over those with substantial (and unrecanted) scholarly records.

It's hard to know what to make of Thomas supporters like Guido Calabresi and Margaret Bush Wilson, who say they endorse him in the hope that he'll turn out to be different from what he seems. Both have a personal connection: Calabresi, dean of Yale Law School, knew Thomas as a student; Wilson, a former chairwoman of the NAACP, was his landlady in St. Louis. So their sympathy is understandable. The blank slate allows them to read on it what they want to read. But don't they find it disconcerting to see their endorsements brandished by Thomas supporters who read the same slate and see the opposite message? A more prudent policy, it seems to me, when the slate is purposely kept blank, is to assume that the nominee's supporters know what they're doing.

MICHAEL KINSLEY

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

WASHINGTON DIARIST

Up against the mall

GEORGE WILL SAYS THAT WHAT the underclass needs is another John Wesley. I agree. Wesley, the founder of Methodism who stirred hundreds of thousands of people to change their personal conduct, was a liberal of his day: a social reformer, an egalitarian critic of the wealthy, a vehement opponent of slavery. Will got the Wesley idea from Roger Starr, who wrote in *The Public Interest* that social breakdown today in New York matches what Wesley found in London in the early 1700s. New York has crack, London had gin, and so on. "Wesley evangelized the underclass, exhorting pride and combating family disintegration by reforming behavior," Will writes. Wesley restored "the moral environment in which the poor live," a feature lacking in many schemes in New York and other cities to encourage the ghetto poor to work, keep families together, avoid drugs, and so on. But Will ignored one critical point: the source of Wesley's power was religious faith, and religion of a peculiarly social kind. Wesley's evangelism was inseparable from his social activism, in a similar way to the Catholic Worker movement in this country. Along with his commitment to the poor, he exhorted the poor to follow Christian teachings, which meant they had to change their personal behavior drastically. They did, and I think it was because Wesley's message also satisfied a spiritual hunger. The same is true today. A secular Wesley with tips on how to shake poverty won't grip the underclass. A religious Wesley, a new Martin Luther King Jr., might. I understand why Will didn't play up Wesley's religious appeal. Some people insist that religion not only can't solve social problems, it shouldn't even enter the national debate on them at all. I disagree on both counts.

ON THE SUBJECT OF AILING CITIES, the prescription preferred by many politicians is no longer viable. It consists of massive aid by the state and federal governments. You still hear mayors pleading for it. Governor Mario Cuomo of New York wants it to be a top priority for the 1992 Democratic presidential nominee. Sorry, but the money won't be coming. There's a demographic reason, cited by Tom and Mary Edsall in their excellent book *Chain Reaction: The Impact of Race, Rights, and Taxes on American Politics*. "The election of 1992 will be the first in the nation's history in which the suburban vote will constitute an absolute majority," they write. "The consequences of this development cannot be overestimated." Too true. Suburbanites have practically no interest in bailing out cities, which they've purposely fled. The press reinforces suburban disgust by dwelling on lurid tales of city crime and corruption. Suburban politicians make entire careers out of protecting their constituents from the spillover of urban social disorder. And there's another reason, familiar to any suburban parent, for the lack of concern for cities. Suburban kids scarcely go into the city anymore. Mine don't, anyway. When I was growing up in the suburbs (Arlington, Virginia), going into the city was a treat. My kids, third-generation suburbanites, regard it as an ordeal. They respond to the centrifugal pull of malls. They know their way to every mall within twenty-five miles but can barely find their way to my office in Washington by car or subway.

THIS HAS BEEN A TOUGH YEAR FOR the Kennedys. Since the alleged rape at the family's Palm Beach mansion last Easter weekend, Senator Teddy Kennedy now rivals Vice President Dan Quayle and John Sununu, the White House chief of staff, as the butt of jokes by Johnny Carson, Jay Leno, Arsenio Hall, and David Letterman. Example: Teddy Kennedy has the 1992 Democratic presidential nomination in his pocket—if only he can find his pants. Second example: Kennedy is the only 59-year-old who still takes spring break in Florida. An even more damaging blow to the Kennedys, in the long run anyway, is a book titled *A Question of Character: A Life of John F. Kennedy*. Its author, Thomas Reeves of the University of Wisconsin-Parkside, isn't well known. But the book is a ground-breaking piece of Kennedy revisionism. It's not a right-wing screed. Reeves is a liberal who challenges the Camelot School and argues that Kennedy's personal moral failings permeated his congressional career and presidency. One result of Kennedy's moral shortcomings, Reeves says, was Vietnam. Another flaw was his indifference to civil rights. The book, brimming with unsavory details, is depressing to read. But though reviews have been tepid, people are reading it. Wherever I've traveled in recent months, I've checked the local best-seller list. *A Question of Character* is invariably there. The era of Kennedy hagiography is over.

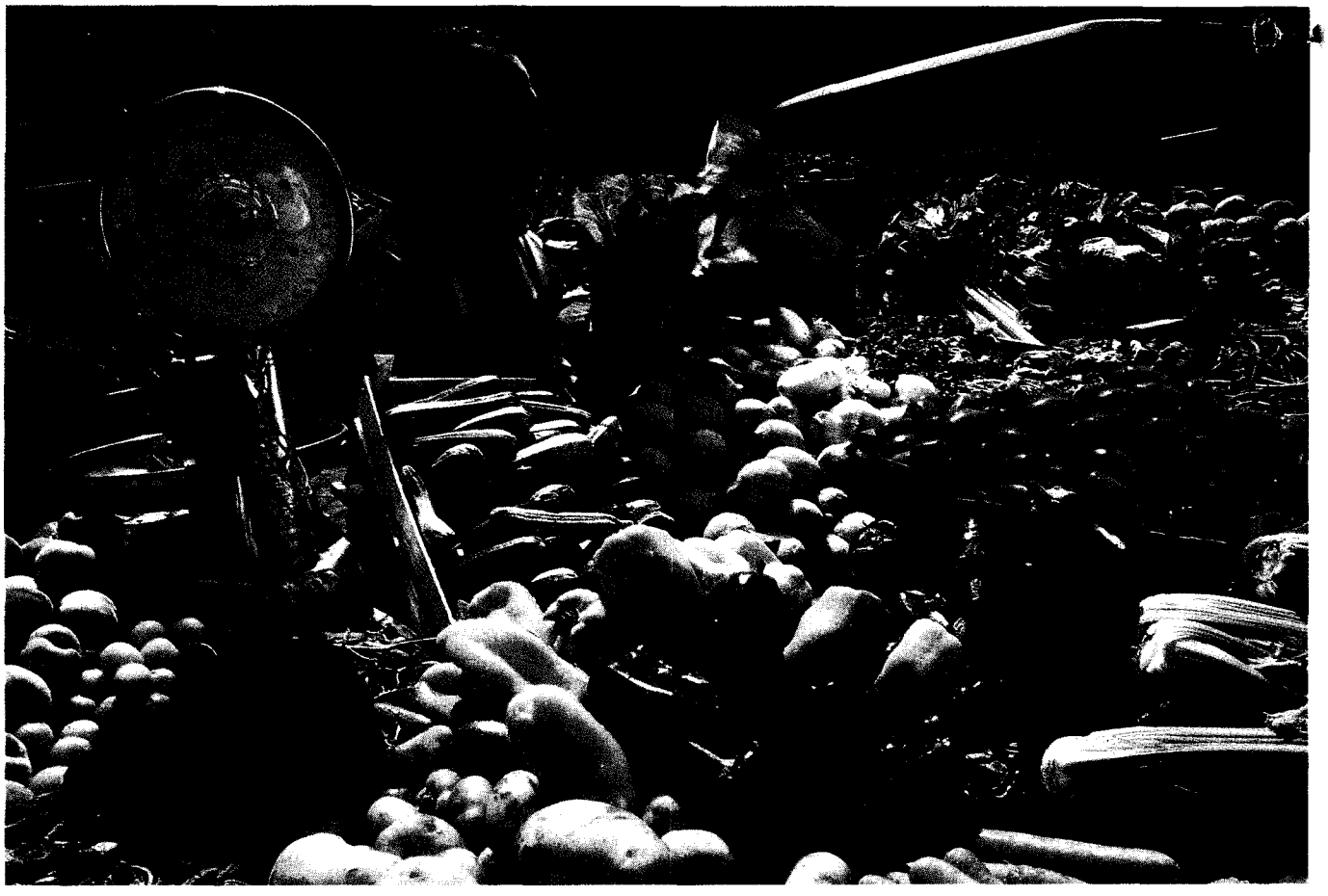
MY NORMAL ASSIGNMENT IS WRITing about the White House. Some tidbits don't make full stories, like the unexpected differences between President Reagan and President Bush. Reagan was renowned for taking naps, but he didn't really. Bush is famous for working sixteen-hour days, even while vacationing at Kennebunkport. But last August Bush dropped by to see his mother and dozed off for a nap. Reagan was ready to address the nation on TV regardless of whether he had anything to say. Bush is the opposite. His venue for disclosing the most sweeping cuts in nuclear weapons in forty-five years was a Friday afternoon speech at an Army post. Appalled, Press Secretary Marlin Fitzwater talked Bush into delivering the speech that night on national television instead. Reagan had the reputation for wanting to get along in chummy fashion with everyone. Yet he was quite comfortable in deploying Pershing missiles in Europe in 1983 though it upset some allied leaders and prompted the Soviets to storm out of arms control talks. I'm not sure that Bush, supposedly tougher, would have been quite so willing. The down side of the clubby, personal diplomacy Bush favors is that it's harder to do things sure to rile your foreign buddies.

MY COLLEAGUE MORTON KONdracke delights in being a prude but not a puritan. I'm more sympathetic to puritans, though not as Kondracke caricatures them (against contraception, biased against homosexuals, etc.). The problem with prudes is that they don't stand athwart the social and sexual drift of the day. Their complaint is just that things have gone too far too fast. Their advice is not to stop, merely to slow down. They are the flaming moderates of the sexual revolution. Like political moderates, they're always reacting. They don't affect society's course, only its speed. Puritans want to change course. Sometimes they succeed. John Wesley comes to mind.

FRED BARNES

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Our special meals are remarkable not for what we leave out, but for what we put in.



Property of
Ambassador College Library
Big Sandy, TX 75755

RECEIVED

OCT 16 199

With some airlines, their vegetarian meal seems to be their regular meal without the meat. But at Lufthansa, our chefs put as much care into our vegetarian offerings as they do our regular menu. Which means everything they use is of the highest quality, and is fresh, not frozen. In fact, they wouldn't serve a meal, whether it be vegetarian, low fat, low salt, Hindu, kosher or any of our 15 other special meals, they wouldn't love themselves. And just to make sure they stick to each diet, we have a nutrition specialist work with them. It's details like these that are the ingredients of our passion. One that ensures you a most delicious flying experience, anywhere in the world.

A passion for perfection.℠

Lufthansa

Lufthansa is a participant in the mileage programs of United, Delta, USAir and Continental. See your Travel Agent for details.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED